

Notes
CSB

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE
CONGREGATION OF PRIESTS OF
SAINT BASIL — COLLECTED BY
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1929 ■ 1965

SERMONS, 1929 - 1965

relating the history
of the
Basilian Fathers
their schools
and parishes
by

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C.S.B.

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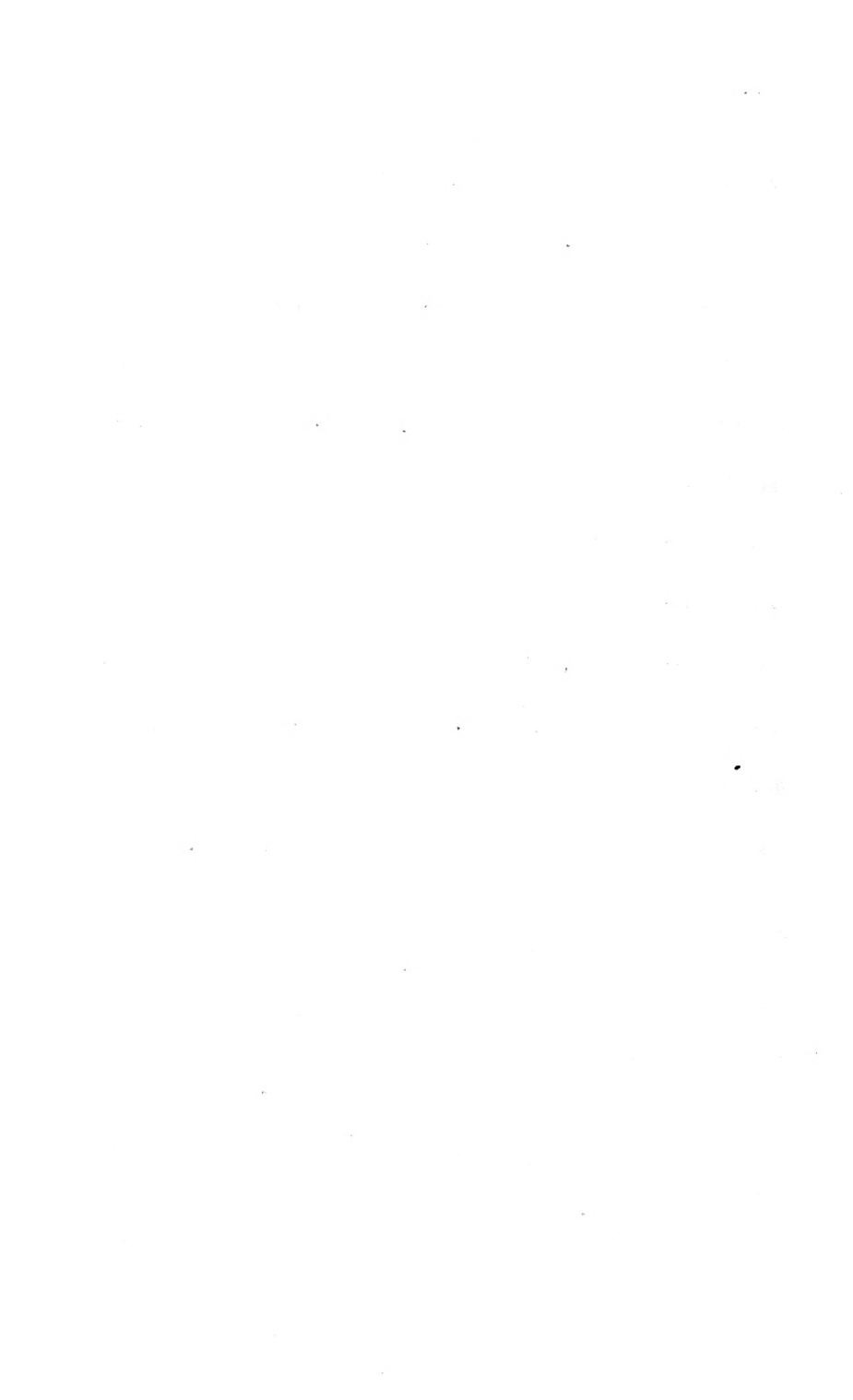
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A little over one hundred years ago ten pious priest^s, professors at the College of Annonay in France, petitioned their bishop for permission to form themselves into a religious community. Their bishop welcomed the project and in granting their request also charged them with the direction of the College of Maison-Seule, to which he gave the title of Little Seminary. Maison-Seule was situated in a parish which had been placed under the protection of St. Basil the Great and from it the new Society took its name. This Society has undergone many changes in the course of the past one hundred years, without sacrificing anything of its original high ideals, and today as the Congreg-



ation of Priests of St. Basil rejoices on the anniversary of its Patron's consecration as bishop. The Latin Church remembers the consecration of St. Basil, while the Greek Church follows the usual custom and celebrates his feast on January 1st, the day of his death and entrance into heaven because St. Basil is known today as a man of very ascetic life, as the father of organized eastern monasticism, but more especially as a great Catholic bishop in a troubled time.

St. Basil was born at Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia, towards the end of the year 329 or the beginning of the following year. In his family he found nobility, riches and sanctity. A sickly

child from birth, when very young he was sent to breathe the pure country air of his grandmother's estate near Neocaesarea. Here his father, also called Basil, taught him and his younger brothers the elements of grammar and rhetoric. His grandmother, the elder St. Makrina, amused and instructed them by telling them stories of the days of persecution. She had known St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neocaesarea, and from her Basil, to whom she was especially attached, learned to honour the memory of that great Christian bishop in whose footsteps he was to walk. The words and example of his saintly grandmother made such deep impressions on his mind that he never forgot them in later life.

Basil's father had marked out for his sons distinguished careers as government officials and orators. That they might capably fill them, Basil and his brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, were sent to Caesarea; a place where they might continue the studies begun at home without danger to their faith for the city was nearly all Christian. Here they met their fellow countryman St. Gregory of Nazianzen. The three became lifelong friends and with Basil as their leader form the company of the three great Cappadocians who defended the faith of Nicea in the next generation after St. Athanasius. From St. Gregory of Nazianzen we learn that St. Basil rapidly became the most distinguished student in the city, even surpassing

his professors. From Caesarea the brothers went to Constantinople where the famous Libanius was teaching eloquence and such was the eloquence of Basil even at this time that his celebrated pagan teacher declared himself to be as it were transported out of himself when he heard his pupil speak. After spending some time at Constantinople Basil went to Athens to imbibe the pure Greek culture which still reigned there. There he rejoined his old companion St. Gregory of Nazianzen who had arrived before him. The life of the two friends dwelling in a pagan city was one of assiduous prayer, continual mortification and of untiring efforts to perfect themselves in true eloquence, that they might later

serve their Church in some capacity. To keep themselves free from vice they shunned the company of pagan students and avoided all places of amusement so that they knew only two streets in Athens, one which led to the Church, and the other, of lesser importance in their estimation, which led to the places where the famous professors taught. After a brilliant career at Athens, Basil returned to Caesarea in the year 355. He at once set up as a teacher of rhetoric and soon became the chief and most popular master in Cappadocia, but God intended greater things for His servant.

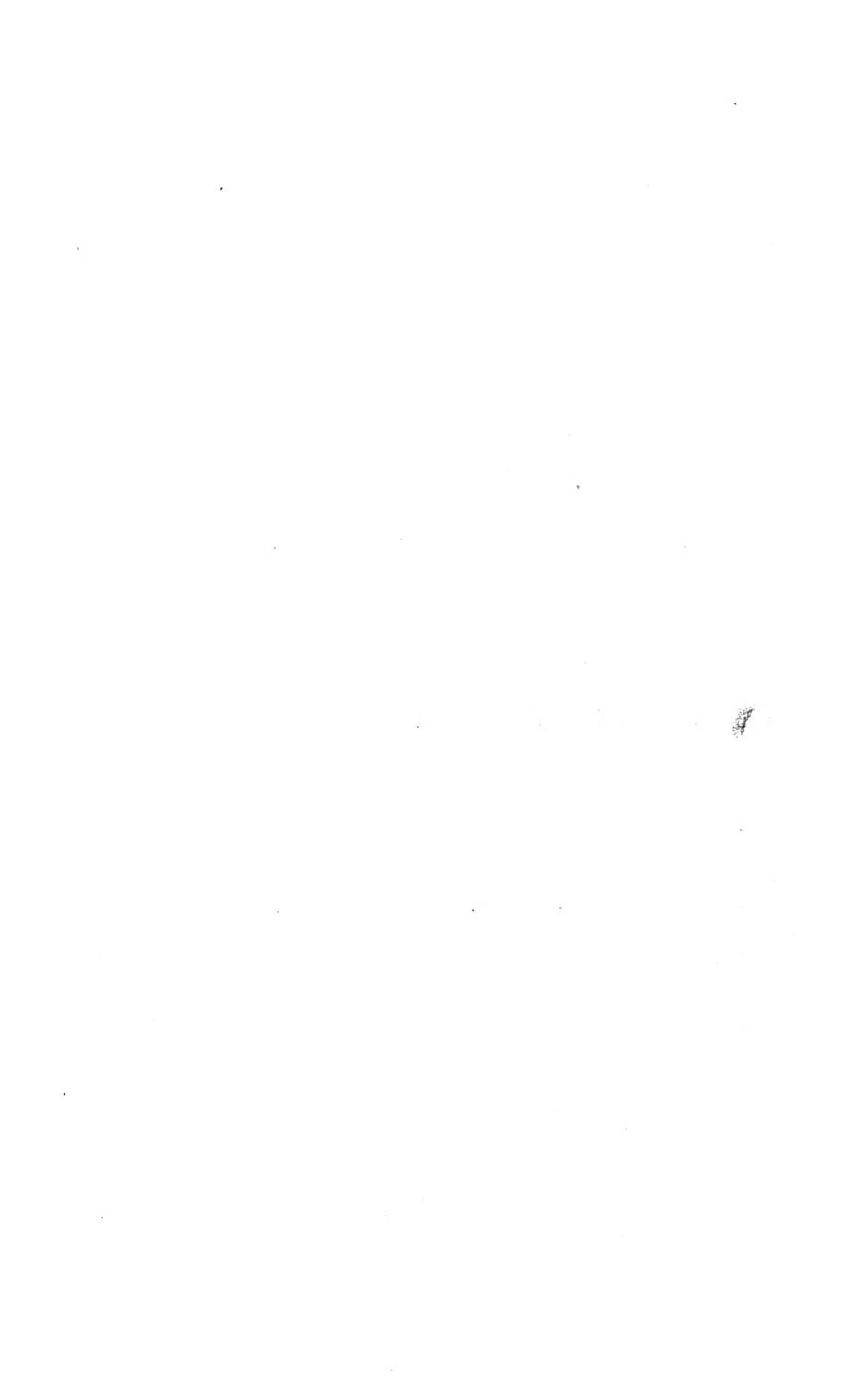
The turning point in St. Basil's life was his baptism by Dianeos, bishop of Caesarea, at the age of twenty-seven.

It may appear startling that his baptism was so long delayed but at this time Christian parents sometimes deferred the baptism of their children till they were of a mature age. St. Basil was later to combat vigorously this abuse. Of his feelings at this time he says he commenced:

"to awake as from a deep sleep and to behold the true light of the Gospel and to recognize the emptiness of human wisdom."

Acting upon these sentiments he resolved to leave the world and become a monk. There were no organized monasteries with fixed rules at this time though large numbers of men frequently retired into solitude. They formed colonies and generally looked upon the oldest and most venerable as their leader. There was,

however, no legal establishment, no legal admittance into a religious order. Following the general custom our saint sought someone who had followed the monastic life and who might serve him for a model. His search led him through Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt. To accustom himself to a monk's mode of living he lived among the monks of these countries in his travels. When he returned home in 358 he found a large community waiting to lead the monastic life under his guidance. He, therefore, retired into Pontus and founded a monastery which consisted of some huts for the monk's dwellings and a common place of assembly. It was some distance from the one founded by his mother, Emmelia, and his sister,



St. Makrina the Younger, for their sex and on the opposite bank of the river Iris.

He governed it for four years during which time he drew up his first monastic rule. It contained a list of a monk's duties, arranged the division of the day and so organized the ascetic life into a system. It was composed of fifty-five greater articles which embody all the principles of the spiritual life and three hundred and thirty lesser articles which entered into the details of daily life. His monks were to be cenobites who lived in community under a strict discipline. They were to undergo a period of probation before admittance. The divine office of the Byzantine

Church was said in common, as also were certain psalms. Celibacy was, of course, a strict law. This rule is the one still followed by nearly all eastern monks. Basil lived four years in this solitude during which time he founded several monasteries and, then God called him to defend the Church against the Arian heresy.

The Arians denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ, making Him inferior to God the Father through superior to man. While Basil had been tasting the sweetness of quiet retreat this heresy was at its height and the Church was passing through one of the most troubled times in her history. The fierce persecution of the Emperor Constantius was forcing many

otherwise excellent bishops to subscribe in a moment of weakness to the Arian Creed in order to avoid banishment. For this reason Basil left his monastery to come to the aid of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, who was weak and uncertain. He was ordained priest and occupied in the diocese a position corresponding to that of vicar general. A staunch defender of the faith of Nicea, by his zeal and prudence he foiled the designs of the Arians on the church of Caesarea and confirmed the faith of its members. At the same time he reformed the church services at Caesarea. This reform was gradually adopted by all churches that used Greek as their liturgical language and is known as the Liturgy of St. Basil. Besides attending to the spiritual needs

of the people, during the famine of 367-368, he sold his own possessions and begged large alms that he might be able to relieve the general distress. Thus when Eusebius died in 370 he was the most important personage in the church of Caesarea.

The See of Caesarea was one of the most important in the east and the Arians, anxious to spread their heresy in Cappadocia without opposition, tried to elect a candidate whose name has not come down to us. In a bitterly contested election the vote that gave Basil the necessary majority was cast by the aged bishop of Nazianzen, the father of our saint's friend. Thus we enter upon the last phase of our saint's life and the

one for which the others were but a preparation. As a scholar he had acquired the knowledge which it is fitting a bishop should have and as a monk and later as a priest he had become the man of prayer and wise administrator that every bishop must be.

His first care in his new office was to instruct his flock by preaching the word of God to them almost daily, and then to maintain the fervour his sermons awakened he established various pious practices, among others that of frequent communion. In a letter he wrote:

"It is good and useful to communicate everyday since Jesus Christ has expressly said that he who eat~~s~~ His Flesh and drinks His Blood shall have eternal life. Who can doubt therefore that the more we participate in this Bread of Life, the more share we shall have in His Life? Hence it is

that people here communicate four times in the week, on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and also on other days when we are celebrating the feast of a martyr."

He was attentive to provide his church with good pastors and to preserve the clergy in edifying regularity for he believed that the faith of the people was properly guarded only by pastors whose conduct was irreproachable. He showed great affection for the poor and afflicted. At Caesarea he built a large hospital where the needy might obtain help and the sick be properly cared for. He often visited it and was especially solicitous for some lepers who took refuge within its walls.

While Basil was thus occupied in his diocese the Arians had seized upon the

death in 373 of St. Athanasius, their foremost opponent in the East, as an opportune time to spread their doctrine. They enjoyed the imperial favour and the Emperor Valens was persecuting on their behalf all the Catholic bishops. He sent his prefect, Modestus, to Caesarea to force Basil to embrace the heretical doctrines. The prefect, having tried in vain to win Basil by promises, threatened him with confiscation of his property, banishment, torture and even with death if he would not yield to the Emperor's wishes. Basil answered that he would suffer little from the loss of his property as his entire fortune consisted of the clothes he wore and a few books. He cared not where he lived for he considered himself

as a traveller in a land of exile. He would suffer little from tortures as he was so weak that the first application of it would kill him. Finally he would welcome death for it would free him from his sickly body and he would enter into eternal happiness. The prefect was amazed and said that no one had ever spoken so boldly to him before. Basil then told him that he probably never had much conversation with a Catholic bishop. Modestus was filled with admiration for the courage of the saintly bishop and was forced to admit himself beaten. Some days later he was stricken with a serious illness which made him recognize the hand of God in the saint's resistance. He begged Basil to come and see him. The saint prayed

for him and God cured him by a miracle which Modestus made publicly known. Meanwhile Basil's resistance had been made known to the Emperor and he at once sentenced him to banishment and again God intervened on our saint's behalf. The Emperor's son was seized by a malady which soon brought him to the point of death. His father, as a last resort, since human remedies were powerless to effect a cure, implored the bishop's aid. God worked another miracle through His servant and the Emperor's son was restored to health. Basil, however, warned the Emperor that his son must be brought up a Catholic. Valens failed to do this and had his son baptized by an Arian bishop. The boy died soon afterwards and Valens determined to put



into effect the sentence of banishment which had been stayed on account of the cure. Three times the pen broke in his hand and he was prevented from signing the sentence. This filled him with such fear that he left the bishop of Caesarea in peace. Basil enjoyed this peace long enough to see the Nicene faith completely triumph over the Arians in 377 under Theodosius, the successor of Valens.

In the year 378 Basil was stricken with a lingering illness. The austerities which he had practiced all his life, his labours for the Church and the ill-health from which he continually suffered had by this time reduced his body to a mere skeleton. When it became known that the saint was dying, the whole city

was in grief. When he was near his end he learned that certain persons who should have been ordained priests and deacons had waited over long because of his illness, he thereupon roused himself and held a great ordination that his Church might not be deprived of ministers. On January 1st, 379, in his forty ninth year he closed his life with the words, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit". Then it was discovered that his love for the poor had been so great that he had not left enough money to defray the funeral expenses. Nevertheless his brother St. Gregory of Nyssa buried him with such pomp as never before had been seen at Caesarea. The crowds that lined the route of the funeral were happy if they could but touch

his bier or if its shadow fell on them. So dense were the crowds that several persons were suffocated and the people of the city, far from pitying them, envied them because they had the saint for a companion on their journey into eternity, while some of his admirers even took pride in copying his bodily imperfections as his pale face, his beard and his walk.

The writings of St. Basil entitle him to rank as one of the greatest of the Greek Fathers of the Church. A theologian of the first rank, he wrote a most important treatise on the Holy Ghost and another called the "Hexameron" which deals with the work of creation. His monastic rule and his liturgy have al-

ready been treated of so it only remains to mention his letters. It is from them that we really learn the great man St. Basil was. He writes on every kind of subject, details of his own life, contemporaneous events and controversy. One of his letters shows that, while he was resisting the Arians in the East, he was treating with the reigning Pope, St. Damasus, imploring him to use his authority to make peace in the East.

Such is the sublime life of our great Patron. It was his life's work to defend the Divinity of the Son of God against the heresies of his time. Let it be ours as true sons of St. Basil to defend the existence of God against the atheistic

teachings of today.

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(Panegyric on St. Basil given at St. Basil's Novitiate, Toronto, June 14, 1929)

The feast of All Saints, which we are keeping today, my dear brethern, is counted amongst our greatest solemnities. For if the feast of a particular saint, as of St. Peter, St. Basil or any other, appears great in our eyes, how great ought we to esteem the present festivity not of this saint or of that, but of all taken together.

At the present time the word saint is used when speaking about a pious man or woman whom, after a careful examination of their life and of the miracles wrought through their intercession, the Holy Father has solemnly declared to be in heaven. Such men and women are canonized saints and we may honour them by public prayers and novenas. There is,

however, another class of saints composed of all the other souls in heaven. The sanctity of this group is often hidden from us, but because they are in heaven we may pray to them, though only in private. The title of saint is used on this feast to include both kinds and today the Church honours all the saints in heaven whether canonized or not. The feast of all saints is then our feast, a special day on which we may praise the glorious men who have lived amongst us and whom we have good reason to think are now in heaven.

We are privileged beyond our worth to have within the limits of this archdiocese the hallowed land of old Huronia. There on the shores of the Georgian Bay,

before the intrepid Champlain looked upon that vast expanse of water, a Recollect Father offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Saintly missionaries, they faced the storms of northern climates and buried themselves in the revolting companionship of fierce and inhospitable tribes. To these priests — the first to enter our archdiocese — we owe a debt of gratitude which history has only imperfectly paid.

When circumstances brought about the return of the Recollect Fathers to France, their missions were placed in charge of members of the Society of Jesus. These noble men broke the fondest ties of home and left their native France to endure hardships for Christ.

Their zeal and labours led but to a cruel martyrdom whose scene is today a hallowed shrine of our archdiocese.

The places of the martyred Jesuits were taken by other zealous priests who ministered to the needs of the scattered bands of Indians that survived the Iroquois raids and later to the pioneer settlers. Then ninety-five years ago this coming December the Holy See established the diocese of Toronto and appointed as first bishop a worthy successor of the first canonized saints of this territory. You have perhaps read the story of a saintly priest who contracts a fatal illness while attending the sick bed of the poorest of his parishioners. Such was the edifying death

death of Bishop Michael Power. During a period of heavy immigration from Ireland a plague broke out. One by one his priests sank under the work from sheer fatigue or succumbed to the disease. The bishop was left almost alone. Then one night a sick call came from the immigration sheds. The bishop himself went. Next day, the symptoms of the dread disease showed themselves and in a few days the first bishop of Toronto was dead, a martyr to his work.

The reputation for sanctity possessed by the second bishop of Toronto has recently brought forth in France a detailed biography of his holy life. During the crusades, Bishop de Charbonnel's ancestors gained the first of the five titles of nobility held by the family

and his father had distinguished himself on the side of royalty during the horrors of the French Revolution. When his relatives first heard of his intentions of embracing the ecclesiastical state, they begged him to abandon it and marry in order to carry on the illustrious family name. When they failed, they urged him to accept certain ecclesiastical distinctions that they were able to obtain. Again they failed and then in a few years the young priest's desire for harder work led him to the vast missionary fields of America. Here he had scarcely gained a knowledge of the English language when he was asked to accept a bishopric in an English colony. To the offer he replied, "Had I wished

to be a bishop, I would not have left France." While ministering to the sick in Montreal he contracted the same plague that carried off Bishop Power. When he recovered he was forced to return to France for his health's sake. While there he was named second bishop of Toronto. At once he set out for Rome to urge the Holy Father to appoint another. Instead Pius IX took advantage of the good man's presence in Rome personally to consecrate him. You have seen pictures of the present Holy Father consecrating bishops for missionary lands. Less than a century ago one of his predecessors did the same for your diocese. The memory of this noble bishop should be held in special veneration here for he is the founder of this parish and this college.

The centre panel of the window over the main altar contains a likeness of St. Basil. On the gospel side is St. Michael and on the epistle side, St. Charles, the patron of Father Charles Vincent, the second Superior of the College. As a young student for the priesthood, he not only left his native land and tongue, he also deprived himself of the joy of receiving Holy Orders in the midst of his relatives that he might assist in the founding of this College. He was the first Basilian ordained in America and he was with St. Basil's Parish from its beginnings. Almost all the stained glass windows in this church are the gift of his pupils who entered the priesthood, and the date after their

names is the year of their ordination. Forty-six years ago today this pioneer priest and teacher was taken from our midst.

Not less worthy of remembrance are the parishioners now gone to their reward. To appreciate the difficulties of earlier generations you have but to look around your church. Pillars, not of marble, not of steel encased in composition, but of wood meet the eye and recall the forests which they cleared. The Inscriptions on the stations of the cross call to mind the native tongue of the early priests. A tablet on the west wall commemorates the donor of the land. Behind it his noble heart finds a resting place and we must be content with that one

token of affection because his generosity, zeal and capable leadership in other days of difficult diocesan debt have made the Cathedral his burial place. Quietly, evenly with little noise and no excitement each generation has preserved and added to the precious heritage that is theirs in this the fourth oldest Catholic church of the city.

Why do we recall the holy lives of our own people? Again, to what purpose it may be asked is our praise of the saints? What need have they of earthly honours who are honoured by the Heavenly Father Himself? They are full, they desire no more. Such in truth is the case. The saints have no need of honours from us, nor does our devotion add anything to

their happiness. In venerating their memory, therefore, we profit not them but ourselves. Now it is a common saying that what the eye beholdeth not the heart does not feel. But to think of the saints is in some sense to see them, so that at times a person even fancies himself among the saints. The thought then of the blessed is as a flaming torch for enkindling the devout heart and making it thirst to be admitted to the society of our fathers. This is the first desire which the memory of holy people either excites or increases in us. But, my dear brethern, it is not merely their company that we long for. We also long to share in their glory. A second desire then which the memory of

our holy ancestors arouses is an eagerness to gain the happiness that is theirs.

The veneration of all the saints is not a devotion confined to this holy day. It is the daily practice of all good people. Each day in the creed you make profession of your belief in the communion of saints. Daily in the confiteor you confess to all the saints that you have sinned and therefore you beseech all the saints to pray to the Lord for you. When next you say these two prayers remember all whom they include. Say them with attention and devotion that you may one day be honoured on this feast of all saints.

(Sermon preached in St. Basil's Church,
Toronto, Sunday, November 1, 1936)

A brother of St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, has preserved a tradition of their time that when the Blessed Virgin was three years old, her parents — the holy Joachim and the saintly Anne — presented her to the temple at Jerusalem where she remained eleven years, after which the priests of the temple espoused her to St. Joseph. Today Holy Church celebrates a feast in honour of this presentation which must not be confused with the presentation of Our Lord in the temple, the presentation recalled by the fourth joyful mystery of the Rosary. The feast of the presentation of the Blessed Virgin, the 21st of November, is a day of holy rejoicing for the members of the College and the Parish staff because it

is also the anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil.

One hundred and fifteen years ago, on November 21st, 1822, the parish priest of Annonay, the abbé Picansel, received the religious promises of ten priests who had been given charge of the Little Seminary of the diocese of Viviers, France, and who chose as the patron of their Community, St. Basil who was the patron of the parish in which the Little Seminary was located. The action of these men was not the result of a desire to found a new religious order; to them it was the only means of carrying on a work undertaken during the French Revolution. During the persecution of this

revolution so many priests either lost their lives on the scaffold or perished miserably in prison and exile that the ranks of the clergy were soon depleted and only a few were left to minister in secret. Some means had to be adopted for filling the place of those who had perished, and as it was impossible to open organized seminaries, the Bishops endeavored to find places where they could train such students as were courageous enough to risk the danger.

Monseigneur d'Aviau, last archbishop of the ancient diocese of Vienne, who became Archbishop of Bordeaux when Vienne was suppressed, established a school for the education of young men aspiring to the priesthood in the little village

of St. Symphorien de Mahun, a few miles from Lyons. Situated in a mountainous district, this village could be reached only by one road and it was possible to see who was coming a full hour before they arrived. Whenever the soldiers of the Revolution searched the district, the priests and as many of their pupils as necessary had one hour's notice in which to hide. The local mayor was a seminarian whose studies had been interrupted by the Revolution and who was later to be one of the ten founders of the Basilian Community. He charged himself with warmly entertaining the soldiers on their arrival, personally conducted their search and finally made up for their lack of success by further

hospitality. The soldiers on their return to headquarters assured the authorities that the intelligent and patriotic mayor observed strictly the decrees of the Revolution and that no priests or seminarians could be found. More important than the goodwill of the mayor and the remoteness of the location were the qualities of Father Joseph Lapierre, the parish priest. He possessed a rare combination of learning, sanctity and administrative ability. He was prudent in his choice of helpers and always enjoyed the full confidence of his bishop. By the year 1800 conditions had so improved that he was able to organize the young men entrusted to his charge into an organized school. Some forty students were enrolled. A few resided in the rec-

tory, the rest were scattered among the people of the village. So well did the school prosper that at the end of two years there were about 140 students.

By this time the violence of the persecution had moderated and it was considered necessary in the interests of the school to move to Annonay, a nearby town of some importance. It must not be supposed, however, that the growing number of students was a sign of material prosperity. Very few were able to pay the full fee, a large number paid nothing at all. Besides this the College was compelled to pay a tax on every pupil. From time to time the organization of a religious community to continue the work of the College was considered and at the end of the priests retreat

in 1822 the members of the college staff asked this permission from their bishop. The parish priest of Annonay who was also Vicar-General supported their petition. On November 21st Father Lapierre and nine priests who had joined him in the work of teaching either during the persecution or afterwards pronounced the promises which bound them to their work and to one another in the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil.

Many of the graduates of the College of Annonay rose to places of prominence in later life. Among those who entered the priesthood, three were raised to the rank of Cardinal and a number were chosen as bishops. One of these, Bishop de

Charbonnel was appointed second bishop of Toronto. Toronto was then a missionary diocese that took in more than one half of Ontario and the number of priests was insufficient. After his consecration by Pius IX, Bishop Charbonnel visited his old teachers and obtained one of them to help him in his diocese. On September 21st, 1850, Bishop Charbonnel, accompanied by Bishop Prince who was coadjutor Bishop of Montreal, one Basilian priest, Father Patrick Moloney, and three students entered Toronto. Less than two years later he received further aid from his old teachers who now sent him priests to open a College.

At first priests and students lived with the Bishop at St. Michael's Cathedral. Then in 1856 the longed for College

building was opened and attached to it was St. Basil's Church. Additions have been made but the original walls still stand. The interior has changed. On yonder wall is a painting of the Blessed Virgin, a copy of a famous Madonna. It has hung on that wall from the beginning. Originally it was placed over the door into the College. It is the only furnishing of the early church that has come down to us. It is a token of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin of the founders of the College. Before them, the founders of the Basilian Community chose the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin to give themselves to the service of her Divine Son. All you who look upon that picture recall

the spirit of the past. Today renew
the offering of yourself to her Son.
Seek the protection of the Blessed
Virgin and ask it for the work of this
house.

(Sermon preached in St. Basil's Church,
Toronto, Sunday, November 21, 1937)

Now that you have reached the upper years of High School, my dear boys, you must be familiar with that large collection of errors, the multiplication table. It is as full of mistakes as it is of figures, but it contains no bigger mistake than this, that twice one is simply two and that ten times one is ten. Now you know perfectly well that twice one is not simply two, but two plus their unity. Ten men working together, each man working wholeheartedly, what have you? You have ten times one man plus the unity, plus the enthusiasm born of co-operation. Take an example. Within this school there are a number of skilful musicians. Take twenty of them playing together and you have

twenty times one musician, plus their unity — result not twenty musicians but one good orchestra.

Examine the whole pattern of life. No matter what angle you choose to look upon it you will always find the same thing true. Father, mother, children, plus their unity, not seven persons but one family. On a large scale within nations — population plus unity is not millions of inhabitants, but one people; and those in whom the unity meets, be they parliamentary groups, a council, or one man, are world leaders. On a smaller scale within the nations may be observed this phenomenon of multiplicity converging into unity. Thus there is what is known as a community spirit

whose visible expression often takes the form of a monster picnic, parade or other demonstration. Within a narrower group, unity manifests itself in school spirit.

All these signs of unity in the material world are but a faint reflection of that greater unity in which you daily voice your belief saying in the Apostles Creed "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church , the Communion of Saints." The Church on earth, the Church in Purgatory, the Church in heaven are not three but one as St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." (I Cor. 12, 13) For in one human body the human limbs are not a diversity but one body, so too the

Church struggling, suffering, surpassing forms under the headship of Christ one Mystical Body. St. Paul describes this in his epistle to the Romans: "So we being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members one of another."

(Rom. 12, 5)

Now in the human body some members are close together and act with one another — for example the fingers in grasping — so too within the Communion of Saints some members are in closer union than others. In full realization of this fact the school authorities have gathered you together not into one group but into different sodalities according to your needs, and your union within the Blessed Virgin's Sodality has been sanctified by Her Divine Son Who has said that

wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there He will be in their midst. If He has promised to be present in the midst of two or three, how strong must be the influence of His presence in a gathering of this size.

On the 13th day of September in the year 1852, St. Michael's College opened for registration. That day nine day scholars were enrolled. Two days later classes commenced. During the course of the year a total of 38 pupils entered the College, the last arriving on the 14th of July, some two weeks before the summer holidays began. The staff consisted of three priests, one scholastic and one seminarian — these latter two were both subdeacons. Many difficulties surrounded the opening of the College.

The red brick house on the south side of Queen Street opposite the Metropolitan Church was at once expensive to rent and too small for the requirements of the school. Furnishings were few, indeed I have learned that when the school was moved from Queen Street to St. Michael's Cathedral Palace on February 14, 1853, the total cost of moving the whole school was less than \$10.00. Another difficulty was the language. The early record books of the College, begin with French, then become a mixture of English and French and finally when the entire staff has mastered the new language all is in English.

During the very first days the Superior thought of the Sodality of the Blessed

Virgin. He would have his students place themselves under her special protection that though few in number they might enjoy the strength of unity. The following entry in the first minute book of the Sodality is dated Sunday, November 14, 1852:

At the altar of the Blessed Virgin in the chapel, the Superior, the Reverend Mr. Soulerin, officiated in his priestly capacity at the establishment of the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin. The act of consecration being read and the ceremonies celebrated in due form, the following scholars were received as associates, who signed the annexed act of consecration.

Picture the scene, the chapel — a room in an ordinary house — the altar of the Blessed Virgin, probably a small statue on a shelf in a corner with a few flowers and candles — something very much like the little shrines seen

in some homes, and in some classrooms. They would be crowded for there were fifteen young sodalists. Then as now meetings were held in the morning but much more in the morning. The darkness of an early November morning would be dispelled by candles, perhaps an oil lamp would be conveniently placed in the tiny sanctuary to enable the Superior to read his book of ceremonies.

All fifteen are deserving of notice, but time does not permit. The first was Martin O'Dea, a Toronto boy who later was ordained, pursued higher studies and became a Doctor of Divinity. At the first meeting he was chosen first prefect. Second on the list was George Northgraves from Dublin, Ireland, who

in his later years was an active parish priest and for many years was editor of the London Catholic Record. He was the first Secretary. The third member was Thomas Gibney from Belleville, In later years he also was a busy pastor. He was elected assistant prefect. The fourth name is perhaps the only one you have heard previously, Eugen O'Keefe of New York City. He was made first treasurer and the records state that the collection for flowers during the month of May exceeded all expectations.

(Sermon on the Mystical Body to the Senior High School Sodality at St. Michael's College School, February 23, 1938)

Following the custom of our holy fathers, my dear confreres, we have assembled to-day to celebrate the feast of St. Basil at the Motherhouse of our Community.

Here it is our privilege to gather beneath the first roof that they were able to call their own. From a room in a stable on the cathedral grounds, to a rented house on Queen Street, to a new wing of the Bishop's Palace they travelled until September 1856 when the beginnings of this church and college were ready for occupancy.

The church was smaller in their day.

Where the sanctuary railing now curves, a semi-circular recess in the rear wall formed a setting for the main altar. In front of it hung the silver gilt sanc-

tuary lamp now found by the Blessed Virgin's altar. No centre aisle led to the communion rail. The pews, or rather benches not unlike those at present in the gallery, occupied the entire centre of the church and were reached by side aisles. Entrance to the church was through a centrally located door in the south wall, about where the gallery now projects. Unpainted pillars, devoid of rounded ornament, supported the open timber work of the roof. The brick walls had not been covered with plaster. The Stations of the Cross were small, black and white prints in plain frames. The large painting of the Madonna on the east wall was then placed over the entrance to the college, and where it now hangs the pipes from one of the two

box stoves that furnished heat entered a chimney.

Outside the building to the west was private property, and to the east a pleasant grove where the ceremonies connected with the closing of the academic year were held, usually in the second week of July. Along the foot of the little hill ran a public thoroughfare from which entrances were laid to the college and the church. The church door was reached by steps on either side and beneath it was the entrance to the hall and the chapel where Mass was said on winter week days to avoid the expense of heating the large and draughty church.

Seventy-five years ago, St. Basil's feast occurred on a Sunday. We may suppose

that the High Mass regularly sung at 10:30 was that day celebrated with extra solemnity. Father Jean Soulerin would recall that this was the tenth celebration of the feast by the Community in Canada and that besides himself only Father Charles Vincent remained of the pioneer band of five. Indeed, he himself was the only priest left since in 1852 Father Vincent was still a scholastic. Both Father Patrick Moloney, the first Basilian to come to the New World, and Father Joseph Malbos, the first treasurer of the College, had returned to France but recruits to take their places had been found among the students of the College. There was Father Michael Ferguson, now two years ordained, and the newly ordained

of that very Spring, Fathers Leon Cherrier and John Cushing. In September of the previous year, Fathers François Granottier and Jean Famy had come from France to augment the little band. The only scholastic on the staff was Mr. Michael Mulcahy, then in deacon's orders, but two other scholastics from the College, Denis O'Connor and Francis Walsh, were continuing their studies in France.

An important subject for conversation among the small group was the coming list of appointments. The Superior General had agreed to take over from the Bishop of Hamilton a wide territory in which there were but three small churches, the best furnished of which was that at Owen Sound where the church possessed

one vestment. Two priests would be required in this mission field. Equally important was the fact that the Constitutions had been submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The Superior General had been assured that in the Autumn the Congregation would express its formal approval of the work of the Community; but would it also accept the Constitutions without changes?

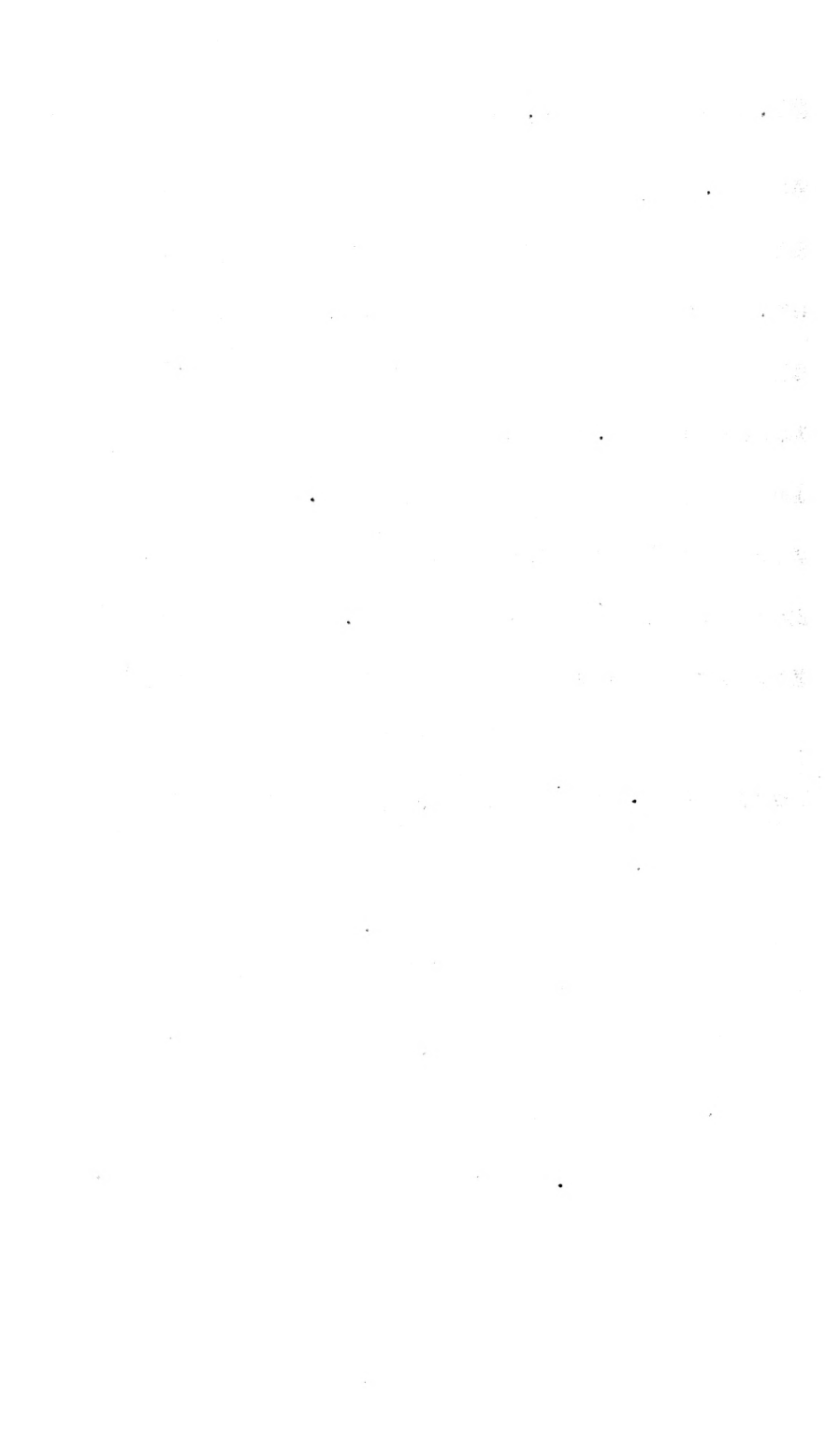
Then there was talk of building. The last section of the central wing of the present building had been finished in time for the current scholastic year. What would come next? The prospectus had even promised a gymnasium in the near future. The enrollment was increasing and the growing number of pupils brought hopes of a larger grant from

the government. That year it amounted to \$1,000.

The day itself was very bright and quite warm. The hand ball alleys, lately erected in the rear of the Church, would be in constant use. In the afternoon, there would be the customary cricket game between day scholars and boarders.

Today as we celebrate the feast of our Patron, we cannot claim the veneration due to antiquity or proudly point to a long line of canonized saints among our confreres, nor to institutions dating back to the dawn of civilization; for we are as of yesterday compared with many other teaching communities. But within the plan of Divine Providence there is a place for us and work for us

to do. About the time that the pioneer band was first celebrating the feast of St. Basil in the New World, a letter of encouragement came from Father Pierre Tourvieille. Father Tourvieille was the second Superior General. He had been most active at the time our Congregation was established. Only his extreme youth and a desire to defer to Father Joseph Lapierre who had gathered together the first Basilian pupils before 1800, prevented his being chosen Superior General in 1822. In this letter of 1853 he called upon his subjects to water Canada, not with their blood, for he did not foresee a glorious martyrdom for them, but with good works. He urged upon them a faithful observance of the rule and promised that the acts



of self denial entailed in this observance would constitute another martyrdom of great worth. Today we meet in the midst of treasured memories, revered names and well established halls of learning — and all from five. What must be expected from us when the novices alone equal the number of professed priests seventy-five years ago?

(Sermon preached to the assembled Basilian Fathers, June 14, 1938, in St. Basil's Church, Toronto)

During the days prior to the 8th of December, you as true students of St. Michael's College made a novena in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Tomorrow, as a further mark of your devotion to the Mother of God, some of you will seek admittance into the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the Immaculate Conception. Behind this altar, on the sacristy wall hangs the permission of the Director General of that Sodality, signed by the second Bishop of Toronto, to erect the Sodality at the College in Toronto. Before St. Michael's College even had a name of its own, the Sodality was established.

On the 13th day of September in the year

1852, at the request of Bishop Charbonnel, three Basilian priests and two Basilian scholastics opened the College in a house on the south side of Queen Street, a little east of Yonge Street. The first to register were nine day scholars. Classes commenced two days later on the 15th. During the course of the year a total of 38 pupils entered, the last enrolling on the 14th of July some two weeks before the summer holidays began. The rent of this red brick house was a heavy expense and in February 1853 the bishop made room for the school in the cathedral palace. This was not as difficult as it sounds because the total cost of moving was less than \$1.00. From its new location, beside St. Michael's Cathedral, the College received its name.

Before the College moved, the Sodality had been started. An entry in the first minute book, dated Sunday November 14, 1852, reads:

"At the altar of the Blessed Virgin in the chapel, the Superior, the Reverend Mr. Soulerin, officiated in his priestly capacity at the establishment of the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin. The act of consecration being read and the ceremonies celebrated in due form, the following scholars were received as associates, who signed the annexed act of consecration."

Picture the scene. The chapel was a room in a rather small house. The altar with a few late flowers and probably a small statue or perhaps only a picture -- something very much like the shrines you have seen in a classroom. The room would be craded for there were fifteen young sodalist. Then as now, the meetings were held in the mornings, but much

more in the morning, about six o'clock. The darkness of the November morning would be dispelled by the candles. Perhaps an oil lamp would be conveniently placed in the small sanctuary to help the Superior read the book of ceremonies.

The first of the charter members was Martin O'Dea, a Toronto boy who later was ordained priest, pursued higher studies and became a Doctor of Divinity. He was also the first prefect of the Sodality. George Northgraves, from Ireland, was the first secretary and has second place in the membership roll. He, too, was ordained, taught at the College and later became editor of the Catholic Record in London. At the time of his death, about 1920, he was the

last link with the pioneer sodality.

Third place on the list went to Thomas Gibney of Belleville who was assistant prefect. A resident of New York City, Eugene O'Keefe, was the fourth charter member. He was the first treasurer and must have had considerable financial talent since the records state that the collection for flowers during the month of May exceeded all expectations. For those who can never quite make the first places it may be some consolation to know that lower down in the list were two students, one of whom became a bishop, the other archbishop of Toronto.

Throughout the years the Sodality has been a tradition and a source of strength to the College. To be sure, there have been periods of less faithfulness; but

they are years of which we are not proud. At present the Sodality is in a flourishing condition. There is one proof of the Superior's interest in it which you may have overlooked. Seven years ago he was able to visit Italy during the summer vacation. From that trip he brought back not a tourists' souvenirs but a statue of St. Joseph and another of the Blessed Virgin sculptured in pure white marble that the Sodality might have a statue worthy of its Patron.

Tomorrow, during the reception, recall the foundation of the Sodality eighty-six years and then, whenever you say the Hail Mary ask the Blessed Virgin to keep you as devoted to her as were its charter members.

(Sermon preached to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin at St. Michael's College, December 10, 1938, in the college chapel)

This morning, my dear students, we have come together for the first general meeting of the Blessed Virgin's Sodality for the academic year 1941-42. In reality this Mass is the third Sodality event for the year. The first was the choice of the executive; the Prefect and other officers by the Students' Administrative Council; and myself as Moderator by the Superior. The second act of the Sodality was the meeting of the duly constituted officers to make plans for the coming year. Naturally the reception of new members which is planned for December 8th and the meeting of the expense of flowers for Our Lady's altar were among the topics discussed. The work entailed in these two tasks was

divided among the officers and you are asked to give them cordial co-operation.

But there is something more. This year marks the 90th year of the Sodality's existence. It is not an anniversary that calls for a public celebration but surely the completion of nine decades should not pass unnoticed. Now the Sodality differs from most student organizations in being a spiritual society. Therefore, an outstanding year, a bigger and better than ever year, does not mean a spectacular display designed to impress the public mind. Rather a banner year calls for a spiritual renewal, a deepening realization of our supernatural end. This is the care of the individual, the quick-

ening of the spiritual life in his own soul, and if each member of the Sodality will seriously undertake his own personal sanctification that will suffice for the observance of the completion of the ninth decade of the Sodality's history. Such an observance will not pass unnoticed. It will have an external manifestation because devotion and faithfulness to prayer will increase, assistance at Holy Mass will be more reverent, Communions will be more frequent, not only at the Sodality Mass but throughout the week.

Two weeks ago Father M.V. Kelly celebrated the golden jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. Father Kelly is one of the oldest living members of

the Sodality and was long associated with either the College or St. Basil's Church. Very few of you know him because until last Spring of recent years he had been stationed in Detroit. He is an honour graduate in English and as you may see from the display case in Teefy Hall has made continued and extensive use of his literary training. A man of experience, he has listened to many sermons during his lifetime and in the choice of subject matter he has noticed a startling omission. It is not a matter of little consequence, rather it is stressed in five Sunday gospels and is mentioned in others. Yet it is seldom preached. That subject is the abuse of grace. Call to mind the young man who turned away sad because

he had vast possessions; and the man who buried his one talent instead of using it. Very closely connected is a question that frequently arises, "Is it a sin to do this or that?" The catholic approach should be, "Is it better to do this or is it better to avoid it?" Until Christmas, therefore, the majority of the Sodality sermons will deal with grace and especially with the proper use of God's gifts. In this, both in the fullness of grace and in the right use of it, we shall find the Blessed Virgin a model who deserved to be addressed, "Hail, full of grace."

An important part of the Sodality's work is your private devotion to the Blessed

Virgin. It is something that is largely unseen yet present it must be, otherwise the Sodality falls short. Our public exercises are a minimum, Mass, Communion, sermon, and some decoration of Our Lady's altar. They are all things you have done before and will do again when your College life has finished. So, too, with your private devotions. They must be some exercise that you can and will keep up. We might, for instance, very profitably say some part of the Office of the Blessed Virgin in common, but few would continue it in later life. If you have not already chosen some special devotion suited to your spiritual tastes choose one now and stick to it. Keep it up. It may not be easy to account

for your taste, but back of it will be the grace of God. In my own case, among the mysteries of the Rosary, for some reason I feel more attracted to the fourth Glorious Mystery, the Assumption. Why that should be, I cannot say. Perhaps it is the accident of my birthday coming on the feast of the Assumption. But, whatever your choice lay now a firm foundation so that your devotion will not wither away. You are now in a formative stage, spiritually as well as intellectually. Something more is expected of you than of others. Already, back home, your knowledge is looked up to as something on a higher plane. So too, Our Lady as she looks down from heaven expects from you one step further, a

fervent and faithful observance of some
pious practice in her honour.

(Sermon preached to the Arts Sodality,
St. Michael's College, Toronto,
October 4, 1941)

In the early days of the Church, my dear students, the first Catholics were accustomed to observe the anniversary of a martyr's death, but the violence of the persecutions was such that the number of martyrs became very large and as a consequence their feasts were grouped together. It became the practice to keep on special days only the feasts of great martyrs, like the apostles, and the feasts of local martyrs. All others were remembered on one day. Later on other holy people who had not been called upon to shed their blood for the Faith were also honoured on this day. Today on the feasts of All Saints Holy Church venerates not only the martyrs and canonized saints but all who are in heaven. This day is the feast day of the entire Church Triumphant.

The feast of All Saints is one that has a special meaning for the Sodality because during the course of nine decades many of its members have entered the ranks of the blessed in heaven. For among the members have been numbered some whom others would seek out in church, just to be near them while they prayed. Their piety was such that without any effort on their part it made others feel that they could pray much better when they were near them.

Others there have been who were reputed to be able to work miracles, men whose lives were as edifying as their reputation for saintliness would suggest. To the grave of one in particular, now forty years after his death, people still come to pray and carry away a bit of earth.

More than one priest from within its ranks has been mortally stricken while attending a sick person under conditions that called forth heroic fidelity to duty. Among the members there have not been lacking a few whose charity over and above the call of duty brought them to an early grave. Before the Sodality was two decades in existence, a priest from within its ranks was called upon to give spiritual comfort to a victim of smallpox, then a disease more dreaded than now. A little later he learned that nobody would risk driving the victim to the rude isolation hospital where he might have some hope of recovery. At once he hitched up his horse and buggy and for a few miles was in close contact with the sick person. Within the week he was dead, the man recovered.

The first director of the Sodality, Father Charles Vincent, was a saintly man. When the diocese of Toronto was founded one hundred years ago next month, the first bishop wished to establish a college to provide for higher catholic education, but he could not obtain priests to staff it. Ten years later the second bishop, Armand Comte de Charbonnel, returned to the task. Again there was a shortage of priests but at last his old teachers in France undertook the work. In 1852 the Basilian Community numbered about 33 priests. Three could be sent and to make up the needed staff, two scholastics, Mr. Charles Vincent and Mr. William Flannery, volunteered to accompany them. Picture

what it meant. He was the talented son of very well to do parents and the possessor of an exceptionally fine voice so that his father wished him to train for the Paris opera. Instead he resolved to enter the religious life. Now on the eve of his ordination he deprives himself of the consolation of saying his First Mass surrounded by relatives and friends, leaves the sunny south of France, and as a foreign missionary crosses the ocean to a colder and pioneer land where he must learn a language to him strange and difficult. For thirty-eight years, as teacher, treasurer and superior he laboured here, until fifty-one years ago on the first of November, 1890, he was called to his

eternal reward. This morning we have a triple link with him: the day itself, the missal and the chalice on the altar for the Mass was read from a Missal given to him by the students of the College on the occasion of his silver jubilee in 1878 and the chalice in which the Precious Blood was offered is the one presented to him by the staff on the same day.

When this building was opened in 1856 the front part of the church was not built and the college chapel was a narrow room running east and west with the altar at the east end. Later after the church had been extended the chapel was changed to face north and south with the altar about where the Blessed Virgin's

altar now is. It was still a narrow room because the number of students was small. This morning as you kneel where your glorious predecessors in St. Michael's Sodality one day knelt, before an altar on which rests venerable and direct links with them, before the tabernacle in which dwells the same Saviour to whom they once bent their knee, ask God to bless you, that faithful members of the Sodality you may walk in their saintly footsteps to their heavenly home.

(Sermon preached in the chapel of St. Michael's College to the Arts Sodality on November 1, 1941)

Inquire of the former generation and search diligently into the memory of the fathers...and they shall teach thee; they shall speak to thee and utter words out of their hearts. (Job 8, 8 & 10)

It is a curious fact, my dear brethern, that mere age should be a mark of honour. The growing child looks forward to a birthday, not only for the pleasures associated with the day, but also because each year is a mark of distinction. Perhaps in the prime of life, less account is made of years, but once again when old age sets in each year becomes a badge of honour.

What is true of men is likewise true of institutions. The first years are marked with pomp and circumstance, then a pause, until growing conscious of a past rich enough to be searched, the years are

carefully remembered and anniversaries duly observed. Today the priests of St. Michael's College and of St. Basil's Church join in this almost universal custom for today on November 21st, 1822, ten priests bound themselves to the service of God under the patronage of St. Basil the Great.

The beginnings of the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil was as humble and as romantic as could be desired. It was during the French Revolution. Bishops, priests and seminarians were in hiding. In 1798 Archbishop d'Aviau appointed one of his priests, Father Joseph Lapierre, to the parish of St. Symphorien, a small and remote village peopled by good catholics, and asked him to undertake the instruction of such

seminarians as might be able to make their way to him. The buildings were unpretentious, a tiny rectory and a stable behind it, and more than once soldiers searched for the school and went back to report no school buildings in the village. On such occasions the people helped the priest and students to hide in the woods.

There is a story told of an ordination, at midnight, in a barn with the windows and doors carefully blacked out. The Archbishop came and went the same night lest some indiscretion betray not only himself but also his priests and students.

Fortunately the fury of the Revolution was dying out and by 1800 the little

school could be conducted openly. Two years later Father Lapierre and his assistants had 140 pupils and to accommodate them he was compelled to move to nearby Annonay, a city of some 15,000 people situated about fifty miles north of Lyons.

All went well for a few years. Good people did send their boys to schools like Father Lapierre's rather than to the public schools that replaced those confiscated from the Church. Father Lapierre's school was the only school in the surrounding country where a truly christian education could be had.

In 1822 there was a crisis. A Father Joseph Actorie who had come to the school

as a teacher in 1798 had grown old and wished to devote his declining years to parochial work. He had never drawn all his modest salary and the unexpended portion had been used for the upkeep of the school. Now he needed the money to keep him in the evening of life. Other teachers had done likewise, had even put to common use money given them by relatives. Some of them were getting up in years. Obviously the finances of the school could not stand frequent withdrawals. What was to be done? Some of the staff had long wished to become members of a religious community, one or two had actually left to join an Order. The majority now decided to ask their bishop for permission to form a

Community of Religious. The permission was granted and on November 21st, 1822, ten priests bound themselves to the work of Christian education and took as their patron a famous teacher, St. Basil.

The new community grew steadily, if somewhat slowly, and by 1837 was sufficiently well-known in Rome to obtain from Pope Gregory XVI a decree of praise.

It continued to grow and spread and in 1850 an old pupil of the College of Annonay, Bishop Charbonnel, brought the first Basilian to Toronto. Two years later the Community founded St. Michael's College.

The Community had been founded to assure the continuance of the College at Annonay and to that end the ten founders had made

a solemn promise to their bishop to devote themselves to the work of education. In view of the spread of the Community to other dioceses it was now felt that the promise of 1822 should be replaced by the three vows of religion and on September 24, 1852, the members took for the first time the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. The members then in Toronto pronounced them before Bishop Charbonnel. Eleven years later Pope Pius IX granted the Congregation a decree of approbation.

The bright promise of the first fifty years was not fully realized during the succeeding half century. The growth was almost disappointingly slow. America was still a missionary country and

vocations were not numerous. In France, anti-clerical laws had forced the Superiors to move the Novitiate first to England and then to Toronto with the result that the number of French candidates fell off. In 1917 Pope Benedict XV promulgated a new code of Canon Law and ordered religious communities to revise their rules to bring them into conformity with it. For the Basilians this raised a special problem with regard to the vow of poverty. Hitherto they had been permitted to take a modified vow in order to get around certain restrictive provisions of French civil law. Now, if they were to so continue they would have to take a lower rank. The French Province early in 1922 asked to be separated from the

Canadian Province and on the feast of St. Basil that year the Holy See formed two separate communities each with its roots in the old. The members in America at once conformed to the new Canon Law and in due time Pope Pius XI gave definitive approbation to their revised rule. At the time of separation those who wished to return to France were allowed to and those who did not wish to take the new vow of poverty were dispensed from all religious vows and permitted to join a diocese.

In 1852 there were three priests and two scholastics in America, in 1922, 63 priests, 25 scholastics and four novices. Today there are 190 priests, 132 scholastics and 25 novices. In France, too,

there has been growth of recent years. Father Victorin Marijon, whom some of you may remember, returned home in 1922 and despite his 71 years became almost a second founder. He established a Novitiate in Italy and from there in 1929 was able to write to a life-long friend, Father James Player, that their first novice had been ordained and to outline a plan for establishing a Scholasticate at Annonay. Since the fall of France all communication with them has been cut off.

In the years that have elapsed there has been nothing spectacular in the life of the Congregation. God has not provided a great saint as a founder, has

not even given one man who can be called a Founder in the fullest sense of the term. Instead the Basilian Fathers have been formed by several hands, each raised up providentially to do a certain work. Not one man, but several have formed its traditions.

Today on the 12th anniversary of the Congregation we ask you to join with us in prayer: prayer of thanksgiving for the favours received since the first class was taught nearly 150 years ago; prayer of petition for the future that the present members may be faithful to all that is best in the past, that God may bless it with vocations so that the work may continue and also that in death

it will not be as lonely old priests that our lifeless body will be laid before the sanctuary gate. We ask you to pray for our benefactors of the past and of the present. It is fitting to recall at this Holy Hour that this Church and its priests are here because a pioneer parishioner, the Hon. John Elmsley, had great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and in order to be able to visit his Eucharistic Lord more frequently gave a portion of his estate as a site for St. Michael's College and St. Basil's Church.

(Sermon preached at a Holy Hour in the Precious Blood Monastery, and at one in St. Basil's Church, Toronto, Sunday, November 21, 1943)

"Whatsoever He shall say to you, do you." Words of the Blessed Virgin to the stewards at the marriage feast of Cana and her only words spoken directly to men that have been recorded in Holy Scripture.

My dear brethern:

The public life of Our Blessed Lord opened with a call to penance: "Do penance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As month succeeds month in His public life it is possible to distinguish two standards of life in His teaching — the way of the commandments and the way of the counsels — the one of obligation, the second of election. For all the carrying of the cross is essential to the following of Christ. "If any one will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross." But the

mark of the true apostle is to leave all for the sake of Christ. The classic texts distinguishing the two ways of life have been given to us by St. Matthew in his account of Our Lord's meeting with the rich young man.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." "If thou wouldst be perfect ... go sell all thou hast ... and give it to the poor ... and come follow Me."

We are told that the young man turned away sad because he had vast possessions. But from the very foundation of the Church there have been thousands upon thousands of young men and young women to whom the Master has extended this same invitation and who have listened to the prompting of their heavenly Mothers, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do you", and who have left all to enter the religious state.

At first they lived with their families, devoting themselves to a life of penance and renunciation; but soon with the advancing decay of a corrupt pagan world they began to fly into the wilderness and the desert to live as hermits and later as monks under the rule of St. Basil in the East and that of St. Benedict in the West. For centuries the monastic life was the only form of the religious life. Generous souls quitted the world, went apart into the less inhabited places that in the peace and solitude of the monastery they might in prayer and work give themselves up to the loving service of God. The poor who came to the door of the monastery, they indeed fed, the illiterate they taught in the monastery school, but as

a rule they did not go abroad to minister to the needs of the faithful.

With the growth of centres of population in the Middle Ages, there grew up another form of the religious life, the friars. These built their houses in or near to the cities and towns and from them went out to teach and to preach, returning to their monasteries to find in prayer the spiritual helps that were needed for their apostolic ministry.

The advent of the Reformation brought a third type of religious life, one especially devoted to the exercise of the priestly ministry among the faithful. One of these new Orders, by far the best

known though not the first in time, was the Society of Jesus. Whereas St. Benedict though not a priest could be the model of the Benedictines, and St. Francis the perfect Franciscan without being a priest, the soldier saint of Loyola must as a grown man go back to school and in the lowest form begin the long course of studies for the priesthood ere he could be the exemplar of all Jesuits. Because they are vowed to work among the faithful, members of these new Orders wear only a plain black habit with nought save possibly a badge or a mission cross to distinguish them from other priests.

The monastic life has flourished whenever a group of noble souls have been

inspired to fly the world; the newer form of life finds its noblest expression in the midst of the greatest needs of the faithful. And just as new monasteries were founded to accommodate new groups of self-renouncing souls, so too Orders of the third type have been founded to meet new needs in Holy Church. The terrible destruction of the French Revolution placed the Church in France in dire need and to meet it God raised up new Communities from the very ashes of the ruins. Among these new Orders the Basilian Fathers who today serve this parish and College are numbered. Begun by priests who had lived adventurously with a price upon their heads, numbering among its foun-

ders one who had languished in prison and had been spared a worse fate only because he was then but a seminarian, it had for its purpose the christian education of youth in and around the city of Annonay, France, and the exercise of the priestly ministry as the opportunity offered.

And when the call came for further service in America, from their fewness they spared some of their ablest men. Today there are none to remember their coming for it is nigh on to a century since the first began his labours in Toronto; there is scarce anyone to remember even the last to die, the gentle Father Charles Vincent who deprived

himself of ordination amidst his friends and relatives that even as a scholastic he might give a portion of his life to the service of God in a distant land.

And yet there remains within these historic walls one silent reminder of the origin of these good priests. Have you ever noticed that the inscriptions on the Stations of the Cross are in French?

Today the link with France is merely an historic one for in 1922, on the occasion of the centenary of the founding of the Community, the Basilians in France and the Basilians in America separated that each might be the freer to serve the faithful among whom they worked. And this has ever been the spirit of the

Community, not the propagation of a set form of education, not the spreading of one devotion, but service to local need.

This spirit found full expression in a venerable member whose eyes were closed in death at a patriarchal age but a dozen years ago. As a student of St. Michael's College in its early days, Father Robert McBrady was formed by the first Basilians in this country; later as a student in France he learned the tradition of the Community from the surviving Founders themselves. When after sixty years in the priesthood he was asked to look back upon his life, upon a life that included more than fifty years of full-time teaching; upon a priestly career that had brought him

the superiorship of this College, of Assumption College, and of our Seminary; upon a life that had put him in the public eye as a foremost pulpit orator; upon a life replete with quiet service as a confessor and chaplain to nuns — he remarked that it was nothing, he had merely tried to say his prayers and do his work. And be it noted that even the most heavily burdened teacher spends more time in his religious exercises than in the classroom.

This evening the Basilian Fathers of Toronto have gathered in this historic church not only to keep the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, the anniversary of their founding, but also to consecrate their work, their

prayer, their whole lives to her Immaculate Heart. Last summer the ranking priests of the Community, in General Chapter assembled, decreed this consecration and tonight the Basilian Houses throughout these two countries will carry out this order. In this decree there is nothing new. The Congregation was born in a parish dedicated to Mary. When it was a question of opening a College here the Bishop placed it under her protection and it was a change of site that brought about the present name. When the first priests went forth from this motherhouse to spread the Community in this country, they went first to the parish of St. Mary of the Assumption at Owen Sound, and to

the College and parish under the patronage of her glorious Assumption at Windsor. In the United States its first permanent foundation was at the historic church of St. Anne in Detroit. When its work spread to Western Canada, it was to St. Mary's Boys' High School that the first to go went.

His love of Mary finds a place in the heart of every Basilian. The young novice is regularly admitted to his holy vows either on the feast of her Assumption, August 15th, or on the feast of her Holy Name, September 12th, that he may the more perfectly entrust his religious and his priestly life to her protection.

In a few minutes the delegate of the

Superior General will read the formal act of consecration. While he is doing so, may I ask you to breathe a silent prayer for each and every member of the Congregation, be he young or old, be his post high or low, be his task easy or difficult, that he may always lend a ready ear to the whispering of his heavenly mother, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do you."

(Sermon preached in St. St. Basil's Church, Toronto, Sunday evening, November 21, 1948, on the occasion of the consecration of the Basilian Fathers to the Immaculate Heart of Mary)

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. (Matt. 16, 24)

You will recall that in the early days of this month the large crucifix on the east wall was surrounded by steel scaffolding. The passing years had not been kind — the paint had darkened — the plaster of the figure was scratched and chipped — on the right hand so badly that the artist had to replace all the fingers. Now the work of restoration has been happily accomplished, the scaffolding has been taken away and thanks to the loving zeal of the present pastor the crucifix is as beautiful as the day it was placed in the church.

And it was at this time of year that

it was first hung on that wall. In the early Spring of 1881 the Redemptorist Fathers came to St. Patrick's Church, the parish to the south and west of St. Basil's. At once Father Laurence Brennan, your pastor, asked them for two priests to preach a Mission. They came late in October; and at its close on the first Sunday of November they solemnly erected this large crucifix to perpetuate the graces of the first Mission given in St. Basil's Church.

In the pagan world of ancient times the cross was not an ornament. It was an instrument of extreme cruelty and death on the cross was a punishment inflicted only on the worst criminals,

on those whos offenses called for the severest punishment. But from the dawn of Christianity the cross has been an object of religious veneration. Our Lord's death upon it changed it from an instrument of ignomy into a symbol of triumph. Today it is the cross that distinguishes Catholic churches from the meeting places of non-Catholics. Within the church the cross has the place of honour over the main altar, there to remind priest and people alike of the Sacrifice of Calvary. Processions are led by the corss and when His Eminence, our Cardinal Archbishop, walks in them a cross is carried immediately before him and with the image of the Crucified turned towards him.

The cross in his coat lapel identifies the staunch Catholic man. It is an ornament worn by good Catholic women. A christian home without a crucifix is unthinkable. There it stands repeating to the entire family the words of Christ, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

The very form of yonder cross proclaims this. Its ends are not plain. At each extremity there are three half circles. In the language of heraldry it is a cross bottony or trefoil. The half circles represent buds. You recall that Our Lord said, "I am the Vine, you are the branches". The pastor and the good missionaries realized this full well

and hence they chose this type of cross that all who see it might recall that the branch which is their life bears fruit only when the bud from which it springs is attached to the cross of Christ. "For without Me you can do nothing."

Friday last I had the privilege of assisting at a profession ceremony in the Monastery of the Precious Blood, just across St. Joseph Street. In the ceremonies of that day six young ladies took part. They had denied themselves, they had carried their cross, they were following Christ. During the unfolding of their vocation they had at times stumbled and fallen. Sometimes they

picked themselves up quickly, sometimes slowly, but always they had risen to follow Christ in a more perfect way. For two it was the day of their perpetual profession. Before this last step there is a pause. The cross is taken from their shoulder and laid upon the ground. Then in perfect imitation of their Divine Master they place themselves upon it and firmly fasten themselves to it by their holy vows. Too numbed with holy joy they do not feel immediately the pain of these holy nails; but soon, perhaps ere the day is out, they will experience the cost not only of chastity, but also of poverty and obedience. There they hang in the world but not of it. And while they

hang upon the cross there stands beneath it Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She who stood beneath the cross of her Divine Son until she took His lifeless Body into her arms, will also stand beneath theirs, compassionate of heart, until the blessed day when she will receive their souls into her outstretched arms.

Today God calls some of you to serve Him in the religious state; for more the call is to the priesthood; for others the work of this College and Parish. May your response to His invitation be loving and generous. And He Who loves a generous giver, He Who is the God of love will not be outdone in generosity, will not be outdone in love.

To those whom He calls to serve Him in the lay state, Our Divine Saviour likewise addresses the words:

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me".

There is not other path to heaven than the way of the Cross. The outstretched arms of the cross firmly block that narrow road. Look carefully at yon historic cross. Notice that, although it is a mission cross, erected to speak to the people about their sins, that the face of Christ is turned away from the congregation, is inclined to the altar where the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered, to the sanctuary rail where the Bread of Life is given to be the food of your souls. In the sacrament of the Eucharist Our Lord comes down

down upon the altar in the Sacrifice of the Mass. When you approach the communion rail it must be in the sacrifice of self — acts of self-denial — crosses borne in the footsteps of Christ. You wonder why Frequent Communion does not make you better? Why the years show so little improvement in your life? You have come empty-handed to the altar rail. Perhaps this very day. The cross has not been part of your life. Christ redeemed the world by His Cross. He applies the graces of that Redemption through the cross. The Bread of Life is consecrated in the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrifice of the Cross offered in an unbloody manner. The Bread of Life will not be life-giving for you without sacrifice — sacrifice

of self. You cannot expect great profit from your Communion without the cross. To generations of students and of parishioners yonder cross has taught,

"He that taketh not up his cross
is not worthy of Me."

"If any man will come after Me, let
him deny himself, and take up his
cross, and follow Me."

(Sermon preached in St. Basil's Church,
Toronto, Sunday evening October 30,
1949)

Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge. (Ps. 118, 66) Bonitatem et Disciplinam et Scientiam doce me. Words taken from the old Latin translation of the Book of Psalms and used by the Basilian Fathers as their motto.

My dear brethern:

A little less than two hundred years ago, in southern France, in one of the fewparts of that country where the Protestant Reformation had found a foothold and where in the intervening years Catholics and Protestants had both learned to get along together, a newly ordained priest, Father Joseph Lapierre, sang his First Solemn Mass surrounded by happy relatives and friends. He began his priestly ministry in troubled times, wars and rumours of wars, widespread discontent, and an indifference to religion that was fast

turning into a hatred of God and of all things sacred. Within a few years the terrible French Revolution broke, directing its fury not only against the Government, but also against the Catholic Church. Father Lapierre went underground. Travelling in disguise, often only by night, he worked in secret among Catholics over a wide area. When the fury of the Revolution waned, he put aside his disguise and became pastor of the remote and mountainous parish of St. Symphorien-de-Mahun.

The Revolution had close all Catholic schools. It was not safe to re-open them in the cities, but his Bishop thought that a school in a little place like St. Symphorien would escape the notice of

the authorities and that it would be a source of urgently needed vocations. Father Lapierre was taken by surprise. He had not been trained as a teacher, but his objections were countered with the assurance that the Lord would supply for his lack of training. "Ask, and it shall be given to you." Now this text of Sacred Scripture occurs at the end of the parable of the man who had a friend drop in on him unexpectedly and at night. The owner of the house was embarrassed because he had no food to set before his guest. In his difficulty he went to a neighbour and begged of him three loaves. Why three loaves? Why not one?, two? or even four? We do not know, but we do know that Father Lapierre resolved to set before the

students whom his Bishop was unexpectedly sending three loaves — goodness, discipline and knowledge. Bonitatem et Disciplinam et Scientiam doce me. Teach me goodness, and discipline and knowledge.

This morning in your beautiful church a newly ordained priest, who is one of your own and who is a spiritual son of Father Lapierre, is singing his First Solemn Mass surrounded by happy relatives and friends. In a good Catholic home he was formed in goodness from his birth. In the parochial school, before the altar of his parish church he learned it. Later at Aquinas Institute, at St. Michael's College, in the first exercise

of his future apostolate at Catholic Central High School for Boys in Detroit, in St. Basil's Seminary, it was given the first place. Friday last it was required of him, for when his class was presented to the ordaining prelate, Cardinal McGuigan, before commencing the ordination ceremony His Eminence turned to the Superior of the Seminary and questioned him: "Dost thou know them to be worthy?"

And he has been formed in discipline. To our minds discipline means bonds imposed from without; limits set on one's conduct. In School and Novitiate and Seminary restrictions, at times severe, have been imposed on him. But the word

implies something more. It also means bonds imposed from within, self denial, the regulation of one's conduct by the virtue of prudence. Indeed one saint commenting on this passage of Scripture translated the Latin word "disciplinam" not as discipline, but as prudence, the better to bring out this part of its meaning. And as a priest there will be things, good and lawful in themselves, which he will have to forego because it will no longer be prudent for him to do them.

Last in rank, but more public in emphasis is knowledge. Bachelor in Arts and candidate for the Master's degree at the University of Toronto, graduate in edu-

cation of the University of Detroit, ordained by dispensation of the Holy See at the end of three years Theology, he must complete a fourth year of Theology before beginning the public exercise of all his priestly powers. Then for five additional years he will undergo annual examinations in Theology. He has and he will continue to acquire knowledge.

A few weeks ago, on the first Sunday in June, I was present at a First Mass in my home parish. The preacher was a Redemptorist Father whose parents had lived two houses away from my own home. In his sermon he told the congregation that there is only one priesthood, that of Jesus Christ which is communicated

to the priests of the Catholic Church who personally exercise it in His place and in His name. The priest is another Christ. When he teaches it is Jesus Christ Who speaks through the priest's mouth. Whoever listens to the voice of the priest, listens to the voice of Christ; and whoever refuses to listen to the voice of the priest refuses to listen to the voice of Christ.

"He that heareth you, heareth Me,
and he that despiseth you,
despiseth Me." (Luke 10, 16)

Pointing to the confessionals the Redemptorist Father went on: "Supposing that Jesus Christ came in Person from Heaven into this church and went into the confessional on the Gospel side. And supposing at the same time a priest is hearing confessions on the Epistle

side. Over the penitent on His side Our Lord will say, "I absolve thee." Over the penitent on the other side, the priest will say, "I absolve thee." In each case the penitent is equally pardoned, equally freed from sin."

Jesus Christ, the Eternal Priest, and His priests born in time are not a multitude of priests, but one priest. In the exercise of his priestly power the man disappears and his personality is converted into that of the Eternal Priest who gives him power to say at the moment of absolution, "I absolve thee", and at the moment of consecration the power to say, "This is My Body". Ineteen hundred and more years ago Jesus Christ lived and walked upon this earth.

Today He lives and acts in His priests whom He chooses from among men.

Moses told the priests of the Old Law, "God hath separated you from all the people and joined you to Himself that you might serve Him in the service of the Tabernacle and minister to Him. (Num. 16, 9). The altar rail is the outward sign of this separation. No longer will Father Ritz worship with his family and his friends in the body of the church. From henceforth he is like St. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, separated unto the Gospel of God. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.

Because the priest continues the work of Christ on earth it is fitting that he

should commence his priestly ministry at that point at which Our Lord ceased His personal ministry on earth. On the Mount of Olives, immediately before His Ascension, after giving His last counsels to the apostles and disciples gathered about Him, the final act of Our Lord on earth was to bless them. In imitation of his Divine Master it has been the custom for centuries for a newly ordained priest to give his blessing at the beginning of his priestly life, taking up where Our Lord left off. At the end of this Mass, when the newly anointed hand of Father Robert Ritz is raised in benediction over your head, ask Our Lord, the Eternal Priest, the three loaves of goodness, discipline

and knowledge. Bonitatem et Disciplinam
et Scientiam doce me. Teach me good-
ness and discipline and knowledge.

(Sermon preached at the First Mass of
Father Robert G. Ritz, July 1, 1951,
in St. Margaret Mary Church, Rochester,
New York)

"Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."
Words of the Blessed Virgin as recorded
in the Gospel of St. John, Chap. 2, v.5

Two weeks of Our Lord's Public Life have been singled out for a detailed account by the writers of the Gospels. With one of these weeks you are familiar. Its events have often been in your thoughts and in your prayers. That week is the last week of His Public Life, Holy Week. The other, concerning whose events we have been given a full account, is the first week in Our Lord's Public Life, a week with much to help beginners in the spiritual life.

You are familiar with many of its events. Our Lord had gone into the desert to pray and fast for forty days, then He began

His Public Life. The devil took Him up into a high place and tempted Him. He was baptized with the baptism of St. John the Baptist. He began to choose His apostles. He went to the marriage feast at Cana where His Blessed Mother had already gone to assist in the preparations. For some reason the wine began to run short, perhaps because Our Lord had brought with Him His newly gathered apostles and disciples. To the servants our Blessed Mother addressed the words, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." And you know the reward of their obedience.

These same words have been addressed to religious of all ages by Our Blessed Mother, and the reward for obedience has

never been any less fruitful than the reward of those Palestinian servants.

Our first Superior General heard them. Father Joseph Bouvier Lapierre had been already a priest for nearly twenty years when the voice of Christ came to him through his bishop. He had been a curate. He had been an underground priest during the worst of the French Revolution, and now he had a little parish of his own. He was engaged in a ministry for which he had been trained, which was congenial to him. And now his bishop asked him to turn aside from it, and begin the work of education. Mindful of the words of the Blessed Virgin, he deferred to the wish of his bishop, and the work of education begun in a small way soon prospered.

But God did not speak to Father Lapierre once only. Some years later he required of him a second sacrifice. This time he was forty years ordained. His classmates and contemporaries were retiring from the most active ministry, into less arduous work. At this time his bishop was dead and the Holy Father had not appointed another. It was the Vicar General who spoke to him in the place of Christ. He asked him to undertake the founding of a religious community. After forty years as a diocesan priest, he was asked to change his way of life, to make new sacrifices. And he did, with fruits that are being reaped by the Church today, in his native diocese and elsewhere.

The voice of Christ comes to individual members, as well as to those in authority. Take for example, Father Charles Vincent, for whom St. Charles College has been named. He had already renounced a promising career as an operatic singer, when a few months away from his ordination his superior general asked him to give up his plan for ordination among his friends and family, to renounce plans for his First Solemn Mass in his parish church, and to go to Canada as a scholastic and take part in the founding of St. Michael's College. It meant more than leaving his native country, it meant learning a new and for him a difficult language. It meant coming to a country which was still under the Society for the Propagation of the

Faith. At this he did, and your presence here this morning is part of his reward for heeding the words of Our Blessed Mother, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."

But the call of Christ and the need for heeding is not something buried in history. It is something that goes on in our midst. A few years ago, Our Lord spoke through His Vicar on Earth, Pope Pius XII to Father Charles Roume and to Father E.J. McCorkell. He called upon all religious communities to undertake a renovation, to help one another. Father Roume and Father McCorkell listened to the advice of Our Blessed Mother, and last year on September 29th, it fell to Father George Flahiff to put into execution the decree of union issued

a few months earlier by the Holy Father. The presence of two candidates from France is but the first reward of our obedience to the voice of Christ coming to us through His Vicar on earth.

The most glorious pages in our history were written when Basilians listened to Our Blessed Mother telling them, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."

And the dark pages are the fruit of not obeying. There have been times when the voice of Christ went unanswered, and when we reaped the bitter fruit of going our own way. And what has happened in the past will happen also in the future if we fail to heed the advice of Our Blessed Mother.

This morning you are at the beginning of

your religious life. In a few minutes you will be formally received. Tomorrow, and a few weeks later nine of you will take first vows. God has already spoken to you in calling you to this Novitiate. You have heeded His call and made the necessary sacrifices, and for some these may have been considerable. But that is not enough. God will speak to you again through your Superior General. Perhaps, like Father Vincent, He will ask you to serve Him in a country distant from your native land, perhaps He will ask you to preach His Word in a tongue that is not your own. Certainly He will ask of you constant and unswerving obedience to your rule and to your superiors. Give it to Him. You

will never regret it. At this beginning of your religious life, listen to the words spoken by Our Blessed Mother to those who were the first to benefit from the ministry of her Divine Sons's Public Life, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."

(Sermon preached at the reception of the religious habit at St. Basil's Novitiate, Richmond Hill, August 14, 1956)

This morning instead of preaching a sermon to you suited to the opening of school this week, or a sermon suited to the holiday tomorrow, Labor Day, I would share with you some thoughts on what is for me a particular anniversary. It was on Sunday, September 2nd, thirty-four years ago that I left home to enter the Novitiate of the Basilian Fathers and began my immediate preparation for the priesthood. I had known them for eight years, having entered St. Michael's College School, Toronto, in 1920, and four years later having entered the Arts Department from which I graduated with a degree of the University of Toronto. After my first Mass this morning, a member of the class of 1925, who had

helped to introduce and initiate my freshman class came up and spoke to me. Today I would tell you something about the Basilian Fathers whom I joined on this date in 1928.

Two hundred years ago a young French boy, Joseph Lapierre, felt the stirrings of a priestly vocation in his heart. In due time he was ordained, served an apprenticeship as a curate, went underground during the persecution of the French Revolution and finally in 1798 achieved the ambition of every curate, a parish of his own. It was a small church, a bit smaller than this church. Hardly had he entered upon his new duties when his Bishop asked him, now in his early forties, to change the

direction of his life and to teach Latin to a small group of boys who showed signs of a priestly vocation. In his consent, his saying "Yes, a new religious community was born with Archbishop d'Aviau as its Founder and Father Lapierre as its first Superior. It was born of a diocesan need. That has always been the tradition of the Basilian Fathers. Some of the older Communities propagate a special devotion, e.g. the Dominicans spread devotion to the Rosary. The Basilian Fathers have no special devotion to spread. They do not have a strikingly distinctive habit as do the brown clad and sandle shod Franciscans. They do not have a special system of education. In all things they are ready to try to meet a local need.

It was a local need that brought them to America. A graduate of Father Lapierre's school was consecrated second Bishop of Toronto, then very much a missionary diocese. He needed, priests, English-speaking priests and asked his old teachers for their English teacher, Father Patrick Moloney. Two years later he was back again. He needed priests to found a school. Again his need was met, but this time it required an act of humility because it was known that he had tried to get two of the older Orders to take it, but a missionary college did not fit into their plans.

Father Jean Soulerin who was sent to Toronto in 1852 as first Superior of St. Michael's College was a remarkable man.

In one of his classes in France he had 52 boys. Fifty-one of them became priests. In Toronto he continued his work in promoting vocations, though with somewhat less success than he had in France. No sooner had he obtained a few priests for his community than the Bishop of Hamilton came to him. He needed priests for Owen Sound and its missions. On July 19, 1862, ninety-nine years ago, Father Soulerin sent him two. One of them was Father François Granottier, a young priest from France who had spent a year in Toronto learning English and who was now judged able to get along in it. I know of at least one couple whom he married and who came back to have him celebrate the Mass of their golden wedding anniversary.

You are assisting at Mass this morning in one of the largest parishes, territorially speaking, in Southern Ontario. Along the shores of the Georgian Bay, to the east it begins where the Archdiocese of Toronto ends a few miles west of Collingwood with Thornbury as the first Mission Church in the parish. It continues along the Georgian Bay, up to the tip of Tobermory and continues down Lake Huron a few miles past Port Elgin to where another parish of the Diocese of Hamilton adjoins the Diocese of London. At one time it went further south, but a number of parishes have been cut off St. Mary's.

This morning I offered my first Mass in

thanksgiving for the graces God has given to me in the years since I entered the Basilian Novitiate. I ask you to join with me in your prayers. This afternoon, perhaps this morning, other young men will be leaving their homes to enter the Basilian Novitiate, at Erindale just outside Toronto, and at Pontiac, Michigan. Pray for their perseverance. Pray that others will follow in their footsteps. If you do so, then there will be Basilian priests in the future to meet the needs of Bishops, of priests, of people, to meet your needs.

(Sermon preached at St. Thomas Church, Warton, Ontario, Sunday September 2, 1962)

My dear confreres:

Instead of preaching a sermon to you this morning, I would share with you some thoughts on what is for me a private anniversary. It was on Sunday, September 2nd, thirty-four years ago that I entered the Novitiate, then located behind Holy Rosary Church, Toronto. In coming to the Novitiate I obeyed, as you have obeyed this year, the order that God first gave to Abraham:

"Go forth out of they country,
and from thy kindred, and out
of thy father's house, and come
into the land which I shall
show you." (Gen. 12, 1)

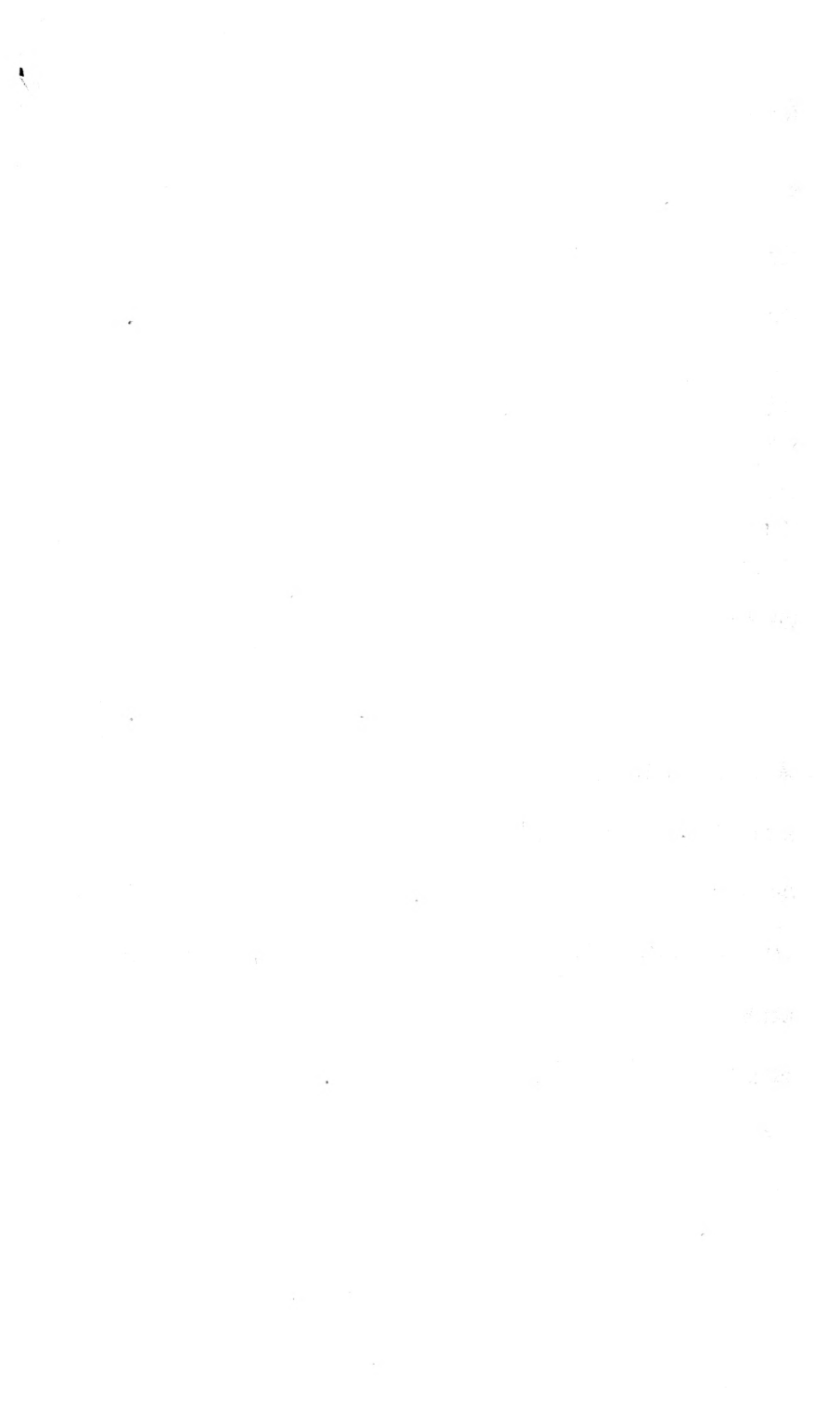
Whatever talents you bring to the Novitiate, whatever graces God has given you up till now, are no more than a faint promise of what He will show you in the new land of the religious and priestly life that you are entering.

Two hundred years ago the beginnings of a vocation to the priesthood were stirring in the heart of Joseph Bouvier Lapierre. In due time he was ordained, served an apprenticeship as a curate, went underground during the persecution of the French Revolution and finally in his early forties achieved the ambition of every assistant, a parish of his own. St. Symphorien was a small country church, perhaps a little more than twice as big as this chapel. Hardly had he moved there in 1798 when Archbishop d'Aviau asked him to teach Latin to some high school boys. From his consent, from his willingness to turn aside from a personal ambition, a new religious community, our Community, the Basilian

Fathers, was born into the Church with Archbishop d'Aviau as its Founder and Father Lapierre as its first Superior.

Ninety years ago, John Read Teefy was a beginning high school teacher when a sermon on vocation by Bishop John Farrell, the first Bishop of Hamilton, caused him to say with the prophet Samuel: "Here I am for Thou didst call me." (1 Kings 3,9) God chose him to be the means of bringing St. Michael's College into the University of Toronto, thereby establishing a pattern for Catholic Colleges on the campuses of many of the Provincial Universities across Canada.

Seventy-five years ago Michael Vincent Kelly, fresh from the graduating class of the University of Toronto, crossed



the Atlantic Ocean to enter the Basilian Novitiate, then at Beaconfield, England. He never made much use of his degree in the classroom for God made him a "fisher of men" (Mark 1, 17) and gave him fifty years of parish work, years in which he baptized over 1,000 converts, years in which he brought spiritual comfort to untold thousands.

A few months before I entered the Novitiate in 1928, Father Alexander Denomy was ordained in St. Basil's Church, Toronto, nine days after he had reached the canonical age of twenty-four. He was an exceptional student and he was also one of the most successful basketball coaches St. Michael's ever had. God called him to a life of scholarship. In it he ful-

filled the charge given to our Congregation by Pope Pius XII on the occasion of our centenary in America: "Cease not to promote with vigor the cause of true education." Father Denomy was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a Fellow of the Mediaeval Academy of America. Harvard University Press published one of his books and when he died at the age of fifty-three, the Sunday edition of the New York Times recorded his death as a loss to the world of learning.

A little over a year ago, Father Blake Coll did not appear at meditation in the Curial House. Afterwards I found him on the floor of his room, stricken with the paralysis that was to bring his

earthly life to a close. God used him to teach humility. "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. 11,20) During his first years of teaching he was frustrated, misunderstood, and some even felt that he was exiled to Calgary. He would rejoice this morning at the presence of eight novices from Western Canada, almost one third of the Novitiate class. When the General Chapter of last year placed him in a position of responsibility, God intervened lest anything be taken from the reward due to his twenty-five years quietly spent in high school classrooms. Perhaps God has in store for a life of hidden sanctity. Mr. James Ruth was my assistant in the library of the Pontifical

Institute of Mediaeval Studies for two years. He died while in his junior year at St. Michael's College. The editor of the College Yearbook headed his obituary with the words: "He lived with God." There were people in St. Basil's Parish who used to like to make a visit when he was praying in the church. They felt that God was so much nearer to them.

In giving you the religious habit of the Basilian Fathers this morning, God is calling you to gather round the tabernacle wherein dwells His Divine Son. Never take back anything from the good will you manifest this morning. Let God use you where He wills in the Congregation for the work of His Church.

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You will never regret your generosity,
as your confreres before you have not
regretted it. Persevere in your vocation.
Then one day your confreres in heaven
will welcome you to your new home with
that psalm of praise used here this
morning:

"Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum
habitare fratres in unum.

"Behold how good and how pleasant
it is for brethren to dwell
together in unity." (Ps. 132,1)

(Sermon preached at St.Basil's Novitiate,
Erindale, September 14, 1962)

Dear confreres, beloved brethren in Christ.

During the past ten days the novices have been listening to retreat conferences, therefore, I wish to spare them a further talking to and hence would speak this morning with the parents, relatives and firends of the young men who are about to take for the first time the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. In so doing I have reason of my own. It was thirty-five years ago this morning that I first talked with my own parents about going to the Novitiate. Since that morning I have learned much about the impact of an ecclesiastical vocation upon a family and I would like to share some of this knowledge with you.

One noticeable effect of an ecclesiastical vocation is that it brings a vocation to others. St. Andrew the Apostle became a follower of St. John the Baptist. One day he told his brother, Peter, that he had found the Messiah and he brought him to Christ. Jesus thereupon made Peter an apostle. Father Francis O'Grady who was transferred this year from St. Mary's Boys' High School in Calgary to Michael Power High School buried his mother last week. Present at her funeral was an older brother who is a pastor in the Archdiocese of Toronto. Absent was a younger brother who is on the Missions with the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society and a sister who is a cloistered Trappistine nun.

Sometimes one vocation is given by God to attract a second one. Father Wilfrid Garvey who taught me Theology at St. Basil's Seminary was granted less than five years in the priesthood.

After his death a younger brother, Edwin, who had graduated from St. Michael's College in my class, quit his job with General Motors in Saskatchewan and today is Principal of St. Mark's College, the Basilian Foundation established on the campus of the University of British Columbia by Father Henry Carr.

Not infrequently a priest has a sister who is a religious. Father John McGuire has a sister with the School Sisters of Notre Dame. I, myself, have a sister in

the Good Shepherd Sisters. Father Francis Launtrie who is at our mission parish in Mexico has an equally mission-minded sister who left home before him and who is now living the hidden life of a Religious Adorer of the Most Precious Blood in Japan. A vocation may come even to parents. Mr. Barry Cotter was an early student of St. Michael's College School who entered St. Basil's Novitiate and who died in 1875 while still a scholastic. Present at his funeral were two Sisters of St. Joseph, the one his sister, the other his widowed mother. The influence of a vocation extends to future generations. Father Edward McLean is a relative of the Foundress of the Loretto Sisters in Toronto.

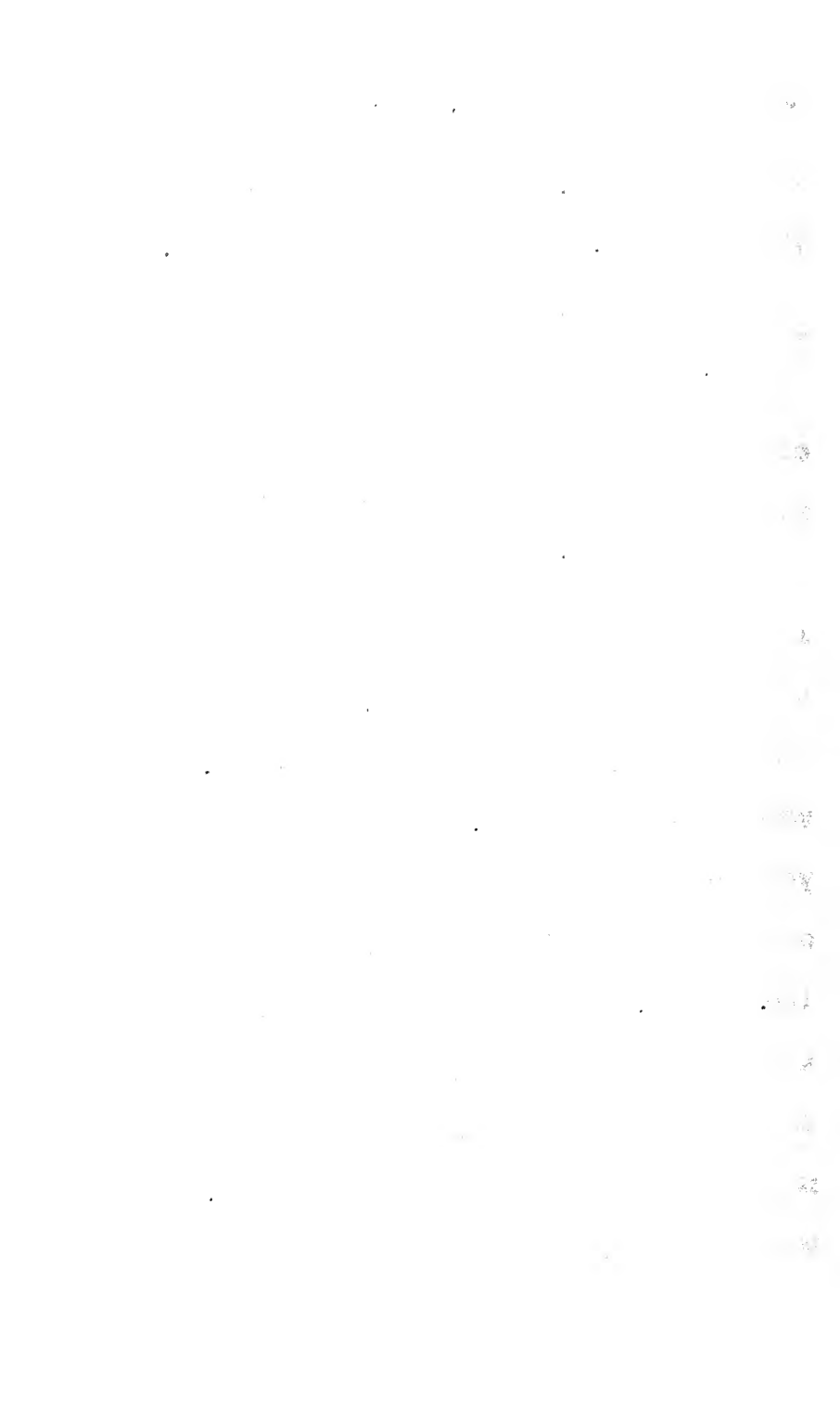
Some spiritual benefits deriving from a vocation get little publicity. Last week I was reading the life of the Founder of the Sacred Heart Fathers. His father was a generous and good man, but a non-practicing Catholic who had opposed his son's vocation. Nevertheless he came to his ordination and after receiving his son's first blessing told him that he would go to confession and receive Holy Communion at his First Mass.

Temporal favors are sometimes granted to parents, relatives and friends of those whom God has called to His service. In Holy Scripture we read that Our Lord cured the mother-in-law of St. Peter. But, there are some favors He does not grant. The mother of the apostles,

James and John, asked special positions for her sons. This Our Lord refused.

In like manner, Pope John XXIII of happy memory, declared that he never used his high positions to enrich his relatives who earned but a modest living in his native village.

The first impact of a vocation on a family is a sense of loss. Leaving home creates a sense of separation. This need not be so. In one sense your son brings you with him to the Novitiate and his new family in religion adopts you. Thus, each day the head of his religious family remembers at Mass not only his own parents, but the parents of each member of the Congregation. When you die, your soul is prayed for



in all the Houses of the Community and your passing is recorded in its Annals.

When a young man leaves home to go about "his Father's business", he does not close the door against his natural family, nor against others who were also God's agents in the shaping of his young life. Jesus did not love His mother the less when He bade her goodbye from the Cross saying to St. John, "Behold your mother." (John 19, 27) In giving your son "grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith in all nations" (Rom. 1, 5) Our Lord does not cancel the precept, "Hearken to thy father that begot thee and despise not thy mother". (Prov. 23, 32) Recently I was reading the diary of Father Charles

Collins who was something of a Basilian patriarch around Assumption College, Windsor, in the nineteen forties. He kept this diary in 1920 when he was stationed at St. Mary's Church, Owen Sound. His diary records not only events, but also thoughts. One entry noted, "Wrote a few letters to brothers and sisters" and then added, "Nothing like keeping in touch with those we love."

The Vows your son pronounces on this happy occasion not only bind him to God, they also strengthen the bonds that unite him with his natural family. You, his parents, relatives and friends, continue to be instruments in God's hands for the shaping of his life. His

profession this morning in no way relieves you of this duty. It only changes the manner in which you fulfill it. By word, deed, and prayer, you must continue to share in his formation that he may walk worthy in the vocation to which he has been called, today and all the days of his life.

(Sermon preached at St. Basil's Novitiate, Erindale, August 15, 1963)

One hundred years ago at the close of summer, Father Michael Ferguson said goodbye to the parish of Owen Sound and returned to his teaching at St. Michael's College, Toronto. When the Basilian Fathers had been given charge of the parish of St. Mary's of the Assumption at the beginning of the summer, he was sent to look after it until the first regular pastor was appointed. The parish that Father Ferguson looked after had four small churches. In Owen Sound there was a little stone church, across the road from the present church, where now stands the Sisters' Convent. To the east, there was a church at the Irish Block and to the south one at Chatsworth. Continuing down Highway

Six towards Guelph there was the fourth church at Dornoch, then called Griffins Corners.

In 1863 St. Mary's Parish took in the greater part of Bruce and Grey Counties. As people moved in the missions on the south became separate parishes. Thus Dornoch and the churches along that line are no longer served from Owen Sound. To the north, the boundary remains unchanged. The parish begins at Thornbury in the east where the archdiocese of Toronto ends, continues along the Georgian Bay up to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula and then down Lake Huron to Port Elgin, a coastline of between 200 and 300 miles.

The first Basilian pastor was Father John Cushing. He was born near Guelph, was young, tall and strong. He seemed to be an ideal choice for a missionary parish. Unfortunately he contracted a disease that was common in those days, consumption, and he died before his 35th birthday. His assistant was a priest who had come out from France to do missionary work in Canada, Father Francis Granottier. He was more fortunate in his health and his association with Owen Sound parish lasted from 1863 until his death in 1917.

In 1863, one priest would say Mass each Sunday in Owen Sound, the other would go out to one of the Missions. Each Mission had Mass once a month and on

the fourth Sunday, the priest would hold a "Mass Station" in the house of a distant settler to give those in the neighborhood a chance to receive the sacraments. In 1863 there was no regular Mass west of Owen Sound. That territory was Indian Reserve or very thinly settled land. As the parish grew and as roads improved so that the priest could drive between the Missions on Sunday, the number of Masses was increased. This morning, the last of the 1963 summer schedule, four priests are saying three Masses, five priests are saying two Masses, and one priest, a visitor, is saying the twenty-third Mass offered this morning in this parish. This morning another young Basilian

priest is saying goodbye to Owen Sound Parish after spending the summer here. Father Rudolph Acosta, whos said the eight o'clock Mass in this church and who has gone to Sauble Beach to say Mass at ten, leaves this afternoon for Texas where he will work among Spanish-speaking people in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. If he is granted the same measure of life as Father Ferguson received, before him lie fifty years in the priesthood. Father Ferguson later went from St. Michael's College, Toronto, to Assumption College, Windsor. If Father Acosta moves on from Texas, he may well go to work in a Latin American country to the South.

On this last Sunday of the summer season

of 1963 I would like to leave you with a thought that can make your lives happier during the coming months. What this thought is can best be told by a story concerning Father Ferguson who had the knack of expressing lofty ideas in everyday language. One day someone saw a man with a rosary in his hand while he was smoking. He complained to Father Ferguson who agreed that smoking while praying was not proper, but who went on to ask; "If you look at it from the other side, is it no a good thing to pray while you are smoking?" This morning when I was outside saying Office while Father Acosta was saying Mass a car drove up with people who were late for Mass. In an embarrassed voice one said, "We are late." I could have answered, "You should

have gotten up earlier". Instead I remembered Father Ferguson and replied, "I think that God will rather look at the sacrifice you have made in getting up for Mass."

During the coming year, try to look at the other side of the everyday difficulties of domestic life and your year will pass more happily until next summer, when with God's help we shall assemble once again in this historic parish to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Until then, God bless you.

(Sermon preached at St. Thomas Church,
Wiarton, Ontario, September 1, 1963)

This morning instead of preaching a sermon, I would like to tell you something about an anniversary within the Basilian Fathers because it concerns a priest who was one of God's instruments in providing you with Mass here this morning. Today is the 126th anniversary of the death of Father Joseph Lapierre, the first Superior General of the Basilian Fathers.

Born in 1756 when Canada was a French colony and when the territory of the United States was still partitioned among France, England and Spain, this young Frenchman was ordained in 1781 at the age of twenty-five. The first years of his life followed a familiar pattern: five years as a curate in one parish,

then off to another for experience with a different pastor. The orderly pattern of his life was snapped in 1791 when the French Revolution broke out and he came to the notice of the Revolutionary Party by his vigorous denunciation of their irreligious opinions. He went into hiding, into an underground ministry fraught with danger to himself and to those who concealed him.

By 1798 the worst of the Revolution was over and he achieved the ambition of every curate, a parish of his own. During his priestly apprenticeship pastors had reported to the Bishop that this curate displayed more than ordinary zeal in the performance of his duties and that he possessed a large amount of plain

common sense. When Archbishop d'Aviau appointed him pastor at the tiny hamlet of St. Symphorien, he had in mind something more than a small parish for a young priest. He wanted to make wider use of the talents he had observed in Father Lapierre by asking him to found a preparatory school for the training of future priests. Therefore, when Father Lapierre took possession of his parish he brought with him a few boys who would study Latin under him. Two years later he was given a curate and the school was formally organized on November 1, 1800, with forty students. Father Lapierre was not fond of teaching and his role was an administrative one. The actual teaching was done by good teachers whom he had obtained.

In 1802 he was asked to resign his parish and devote his life to the work of education. Father Lapierre was then twenty-one years ordained and forty-six years of age. He was on the threshold of the most fruitful years of his pastoral ministry, even looking forward to promotion to a larger parish. At the bidding of his Bishop he renounced personal ambition and transferred his school to the nearby dicty of Annonay. God blessed his work and in the next fifty years more than one third of the priests ordained for his diocese were graduates of his school.

The teachers in his school were secular priests who did not always bother to

collect their modest salary. By 1822 some were getting old and wished to retire. For the support of their old age they asked for the salary owing to them. This created a twofold crisis, financial, and lack of competent teachers. To prevent this happening in the future some of the younger teachers proposed the formation of a religious community. Father Lapierre supported the proposal and gave leadership in working it out. The Basilian Fathers were founded as a diocesan religious community on November 21, 1822, and Father Lapierre was elected Superior General, with one dissenting vote, his own cast in favor of the priest who later succeeded him. On September

15, 1837, Pope Gregory XVI raised the new community from diocesan status to papal rank. A delay in the mails kept this news from reaching Annonay until June 6, 1838. Father Lapierre's work was done and at 3:00 a.m. on August 16, 1838, God called him to his eternal reward.

Father Lapierre's work continues today in the work of his community. Yesterday at Pontiac, Michigan, and at Erindale on the outskirts of Toronto, 46 young men were admitted to religious profession in the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil. Last year, as high school and college graduates, they had joined Father Lapierre in the sacrifice of

giving up promising careers, to devote themselves to the quiet, pious and regular life of the Basilian Novitiate, the first step on their way to the priesthood. Pray to God that like Father Lapierre they may not shrink from the sacrifices that will be asked of them in the future so that they may persevere in their vocation, perhaps one day to say Mass for you in this parish.

(Sermon preached at St. Thomas Church, Warton, Ontario, August 16, 1964)

"Be you followers of me; as I also am of Christ." I Cor. 11, 1

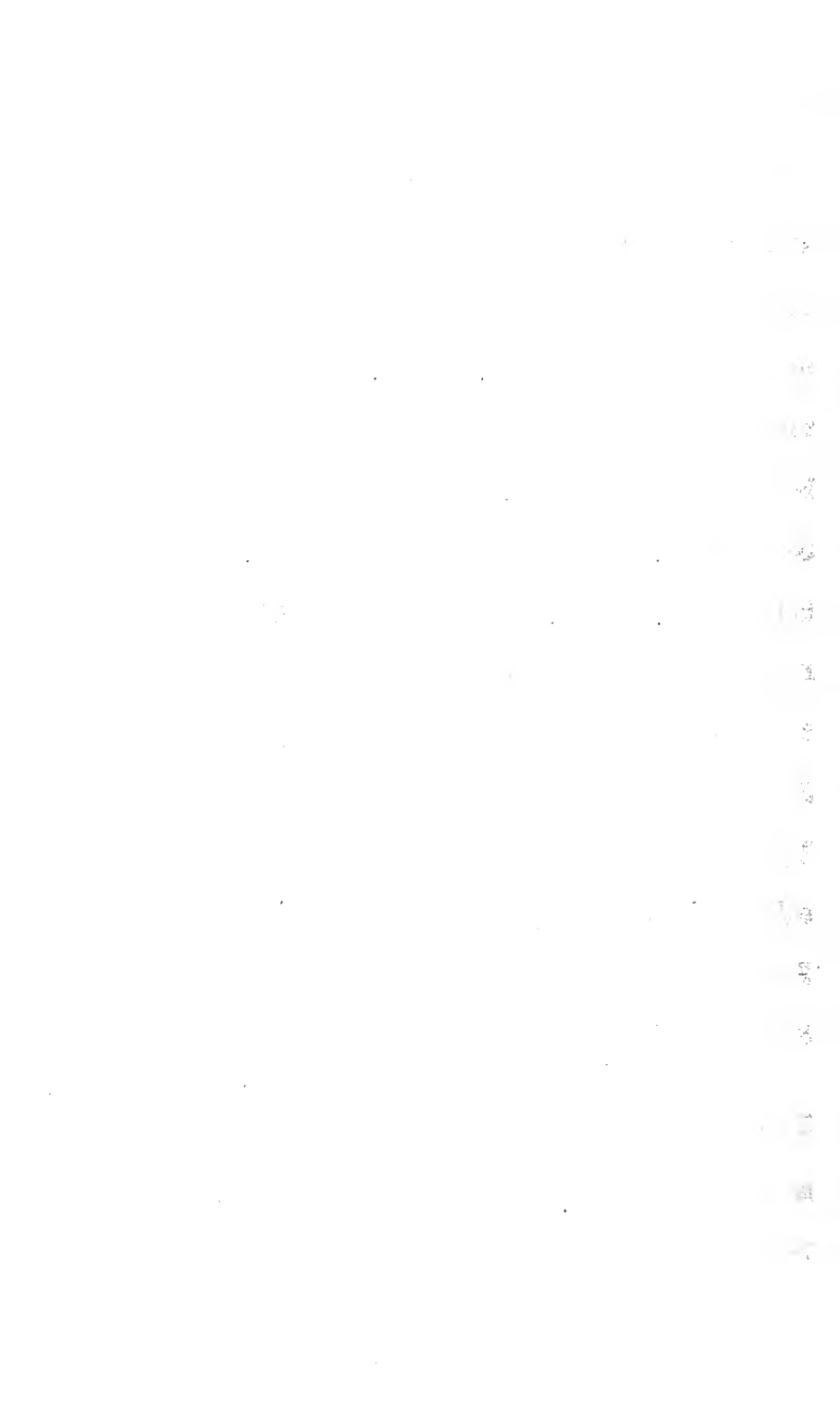
We have gathered this morning to witness the taking of religious vows by three young men. One month ago, there was a similar ceremony in this chapel and it may be that those who are now completing their novitiate feel a touch of regret that their profession takes place on a feast of the Blessed Virgin which has a lower rank in the calendar of the Catholic Church than the feast of the Assumption. I would like to assure them that although the feast is of lower ranking, the date, September 15th, is of greater importance in the history of the Basilian Fathers. If with the Old Testament figure, Job, you will

"inquire of former generations, and search diligently into the memory of the fathers... they shall teach you, they shall speak to you; and utter words out of their hearts." Job 8,8,10

More than one hundred years ago, back in September 1822, the priests who taught at the College of Annonay were finishing their annual retreat. During it they had received the grace to do something several of them had been talking about for two or three years. They received the grace to found a religious community. The retreat closed on September 15th and on that day six of them sat down and signed their name to a letter asking their Bishop for permission to found a religious community whose principal work would be teaching and preaching.

A few years later the Bishops of the district told the Holy Father that the new community was doing splendid work and on September 15, 1837, Pope Gregory XVI signed a decree praising it and raising it to the status of a papal community. It is from that date, September 15, 1837, that the Basilian Fathers take their precedence in the ranks of religious communities.

When the first students of the Basilian Fathers, newly come to America, gathered in a rented house on Queen Street in the year 1852, Father Jean Soulerin took two days to register eleven students, delaying the first classes until Wednesday September 15th. Three years later he



chose September 15th as the date on which to lay the cornerstone for the first unit of the Clover Hill building of St. Michael's College. In 1856, the first classes in the permanent home of St. Michael's were held on September 15th. Mindful of the historical significance of this date, Father E.J. McCorkell, when he built the first of the stone buildings of St. Michael's College, chose September 15, 1936, as the date for the blessing of the building erected to house the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

Now it is the turn of the three young men who are the principals of this morning's ceremony to make Basilian

history on September 15th. What does the future hold for them. When Mathathias, the father of Judas Macabees, felt the approach of death he admonished his sons:

"Call to remembrance the works of the fathers which they have done in their generations." I Mac. 2,51

On Friday of this week, three of your elder confreres observe the golden jubilee of their priestly ordination. Behind them lies a varied life in the Congregation.

Youngest of the three is Father Wilfrid Sharpe, upon whom have devolved many responsibilities in the Congregation, among them the introducing to the Basilian way of life as Master of Novices two future Superiors General. Father

Michael Oliver has left his mark in brick and stone in the buildings of St. Mark's College, Vancouver, and earlier in Holy Rosary Church, Toronto. Among his lesser accomplishments was the publication of the first Yearbook of St. Michael's. Senior in age and in profession is Father William Murray, whom I have had as high school teacher, college professor, and Master of Novices. His work within the Congregation approaches closely that of the average Basilian and fits the description given by Father Robert McBrady of a Basilian's work as being done "with little noise and no excitement."

This morning, as you prepare to pronounce

your first vows, you are anxious to honor the religious habit you now wear and the priestly vestments that later will rest upon your shoulders. To you, this morning, your elder confreres, give this advice: "Be you followers of me, as I also am of Christ."

(Sermon preached at St. Basil's Novitiate, Erindale, September 15, 1964)

The words of the Gospel which I have just read were spoken by Our Lord after the Last Supper in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. Judas had gone out from the room to do his evil work. The Blessed Eucharist had been instituted and now the apostles were sitting or reclining around the table of the Last Supper listening to an instruction from the Master. It was to be the last of His public teaching and towards the end of it He told them that He must leave them. Our Lord had spoken of this before; the apostles were young men and He, Himself, was but thirty-three. They had woven their whole lives, material and spiritual around being with Him and they did not like to hear of parting. Our Lord read the sorrow in their hearts, but He

did not console them. Instead He repeated:

"It is better that I leave you,
for if I do not go, the Paraclete
will not come to you.

The parting of Our Lord from His apostles is repeated at this time of year in your seminaries, universities, high schools, and grade schools. The senior students have gathered for some years in familiar buildings, with well-known teachers, and with fellow students of long association. Now the last examination is written. For a few there will be in the years ahead the responsibility of further education in new schools. For many, their hidden life has come to an end and they will slip into the main stream of life to begin their public life.

But there is a difference between the two partings. The apostles must await the coming of the Holy Spirit Who will teach them all things. The graduates of our Catholic schools have received the sacrament of Confirmation and they go forth to show by the goodness of their lives the working of the Holy Spirit within them. By their words they will proclaim the teachings of Christ.

Fifty years ago, a young man from this parish gathered with his classmates in the chapel of St. Augustine's Seminary to hear Mass as a student for the last time. Fifty years ago this coming Wednesday, Father Francis McReavy was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Hamilton. This year, Bishop Ryan does

not have one student in the Seminary from St. Mary's Parish and its widespread Missions. There is no one, at present, to take the place of Father McReavy.

Perhaps you will say that as a Basilian Father, I should be more concerned about vocations to my Community than to the Diocese of Hamilton. In answer I ask you to look at the history of your parish and to recall how many young men went to the Basilian Fathers in the decade after the ordination of Father McReavy. And when Father James Hurley, a young man from this parish whom God directed to the Archdiocese of Montreal, was ordained again a number of young men entered the Basilian Fathers. The reason is simple. God has promised a

reward of a hundredfold even in this world for every sacrifice. The young man who is ordained for the Diocese of Hamilton will meet in the rural parishes and in the small centres with a loneliness as intense as that of the missionary. The priest of the Diocese of Hamilton meets with lapsed Catholics in every parish and knows well the discouragement that faces the priests who go to South America to work among Catholics of weakened faith. In the urban areas, among the unchurched masses of the cities, he meets with an indifference to religion more difficult to deal with than the ignorance of the pagan with whom the foreign missionary works. The sacrifices made by the priest of the Diocese brings

a reward not only to himself and to his family, but the grace of God comes down upon his parish.

Thirty-three years ago today, one of your pastors, Father Nicholas Roche died. In Toronto, in New Brunswick, in Texas, he was famous for his promotion of vocations. Many a priest, many a brother, many a sister was helped with their vocation by Father Roche. Some would say that he prayed them into accepting the vocation that God had sent to them. This morning as you gather around the altar of sacrifice, I ask you to take up the work of prayer for vocations that was Father Roche's. I ask you to join with your pastor and with your Bishop in prayer and sacrifice

for vocations for the Diocese of Hamilton. And that you may know what is expected of you, I will now read this letter from Bishop Ryan to you:

(Sermon preached in St. Mary's Church,
Owen Sound, May 16, 1965)

